

THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM BLOODIEST DAY

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ABOUT THE...

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LARRY HAMA is best known as a writer and editor for Marvel Comics, where he was responsible for the *G. I. Joe* comic book of the 1980s, and developing many of the *G.I. Joe* characters for Hasbro. His other comic book writing credits include *Wolverine*, *Avengers*, *Elektra*, *Venom*, and *Batman*. Larry also created the *Bucky O'Hare* comic, which was turned into a toy line and an animated TV series. He lives in New York.

COVER ARTIST

RON WAGNER has worked for comic book companies such as Marvel Comics, D.C. Comics, Dark Horse, and Image. Titles include *Batman*, *Superman*, *G.I. Joe*, *The Punisher*, *Daredevil*, and *The Flash*. After studying 3D animation at university, Ron has also worked for game company UBI Soft, doing design work for the main character in Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell* computer game. He has just finished penciling a three-part *Batman* story that will appear in the *Legends of the Dark Knight* comic book series for D.C. Comics. He lives and works in Iowa.

COMIC STRIP ARTIST

SCOTT MOORE is a new talent in the comic world and has recently worked for Rosen Publishing on their Rosen Graphic Non-Fiction biography series, on titles such as *Christopher Columbus*. He lives and works in the U.S.

4-02

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WHO'S WHO



George McClellan (1826–1885) was Major General and General in Chief of the Union armies; he helped train and organize Northern forces. President Lincoln

removed McClellan from command when he failed to chase the Confederate troops after the battle of Antietam.



Robert E. Lee (1807–1870) was commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. Although outnumbered at Antietam, Lee's Confederate army withstood

several powerful Union attacks. However, he was forced to withdraw his battered forces back to Virginia.



Ambrose Burnside (1824–1881) was commander of two corps at the battle of Antietam, and after the battle he was appointed McClellan's successor by

Lincoln. However, after a terrible defeat at the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, General Joseph Hooker replaced Burnside.



John Gordon (1832–1904) and his unit defended a key position on the sunken road during the battle of Antietam. General Gordon also commanded Confed-

erate forces at Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, and The Wilderness.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

1861–1865

By the 1850s, there were many economic and political differences between the Northern and Southern states in America. The biggest difference was over the issue of slavery. The South's economy depended upon slaves to work the plantations that grew crops such as tobacco and cotton. In the North, slavery was illegal. Many laws were passed to settle this issue but a solution to the problem could not be reached.

When Abraham Lincoln, an anti-slavery candidate, was elected president in 1860, the South believed that their

way of life would be destroyed. Soon after, South Carolina seceded, or left, the Union. More Southern states followed. They formed the Confederate States of America, a separate government.

Anger built between the two sides. Finally, on April 12, 1861, Southern forces bombed Fort Sumter in South Carolina. Over the next four years, many bloody battles were fought, but none more terrible than the battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862. On that day, more than 23,000 American soldiers were killed or wounded—more than on any other day in U.S. history. ■

LINCOLN NEEDS A VICTORY

By September 1862, the American Civil War was in its seventeenth month. Any hope that it would be a short war was gone. The South had successfully fought a defensive war. The Union showed no sign of giving up and accepting the Confederacy as a separate country.

Each side had advantages. The population of the North was nearly four times larger than the South, excluding slaves. Most of the food-growing land and manufacturers were in the North. The South grew plantation crops, such as cotton and tobacco. The South's best chance was to fight until either the North gave up or European nations stepped in to help them.



▲
The South grew crops such as tobacco and cotton, and they were picked by African-American slaves. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)

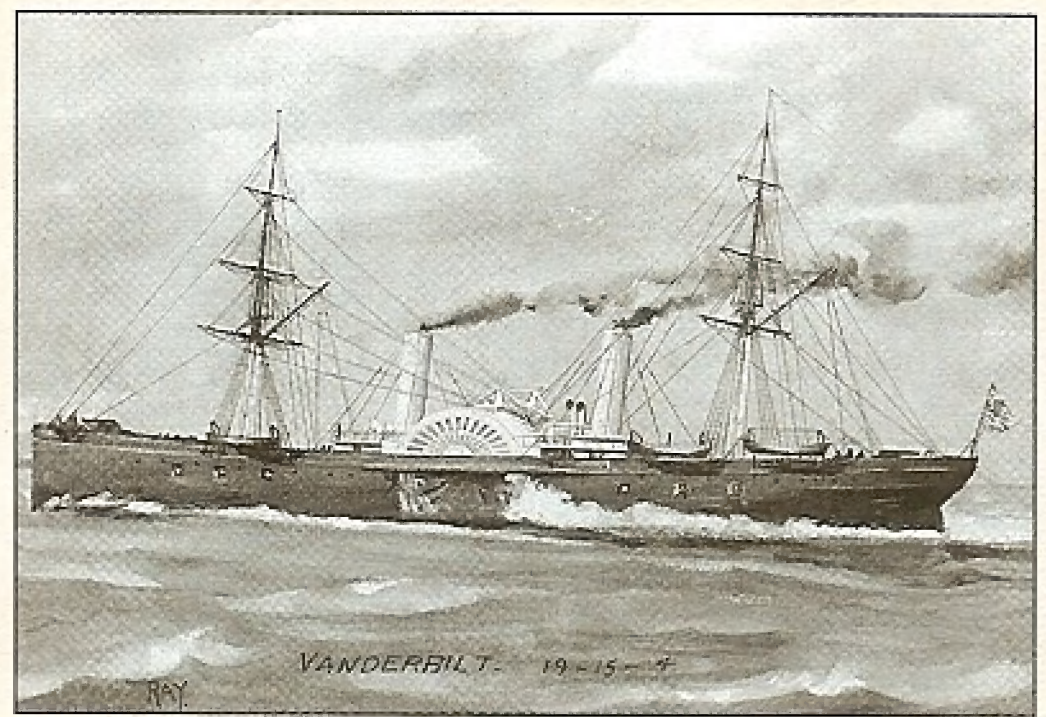
In June 1862, Lincoln showed his cabinet a proclamation that would free all of the slaves in Southern states on January 1, 1863. His cabinet was shocked. The Union had suffered many defeats, and they thought

the proclamation would seem to be only an attempt to create a slave revolt to cover the North's failures. To carry out his plans, Lincoln needed a military victory quickly.

At this time, the Confederacy was making plans to invade the North. General Robert E. Lee was in command of the Southern army. On September 4, 1862, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River into Maryland. Lee began to move on the Union garrison at the important railroad center at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. In command of the Union's Army of the Potomac was General George McClellan. He cautiously pushed his forces west toward Lee and the Blue Ridge Mountain passes.

On September 13, McClellan got a lucky break. Union soldiers found a piece of paper, wrapped around three cigars. It was a Confederate note describing the positions of all of Lee's forces and their movement orders. Lee had split his army into five parts. McClellan was closer to each part than they

Harper's Ferry was an important railroad center and was occupied by the Union Army until Lee and his men overthrew them in September 1862. (Courtesy of Chrysalis Picture Library)

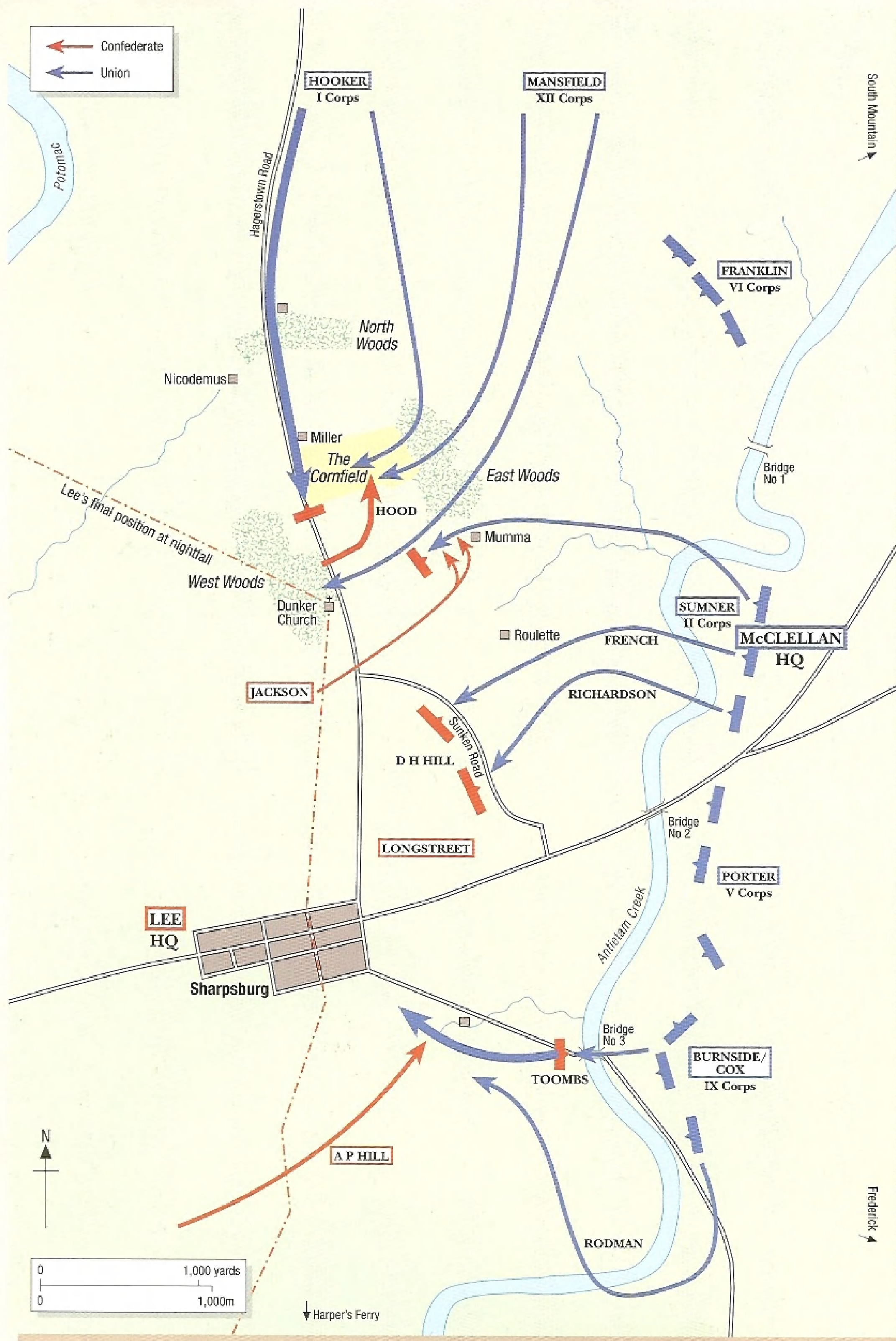


Ships like the USS *Vanderbilt* blocked all Southern ports to stop the Confederates from sending supplies to their armies. (US Navy)

were to each other. If McClellan moved quickly, he could smash each part, and the war would be over.

However, McClellan thought he was outnumbered, and he moved slowly. His troops captured the mountain passes the following day. Lee knew that his orders had been discovered, but he also knew that McClellan was cautious. Lee captured Harper's Ferry and its 10,000-man force five miles away. He brought together most of his scattered army and moved north to Sharpsburg, Virginia.





A CLASH OF ARMIES

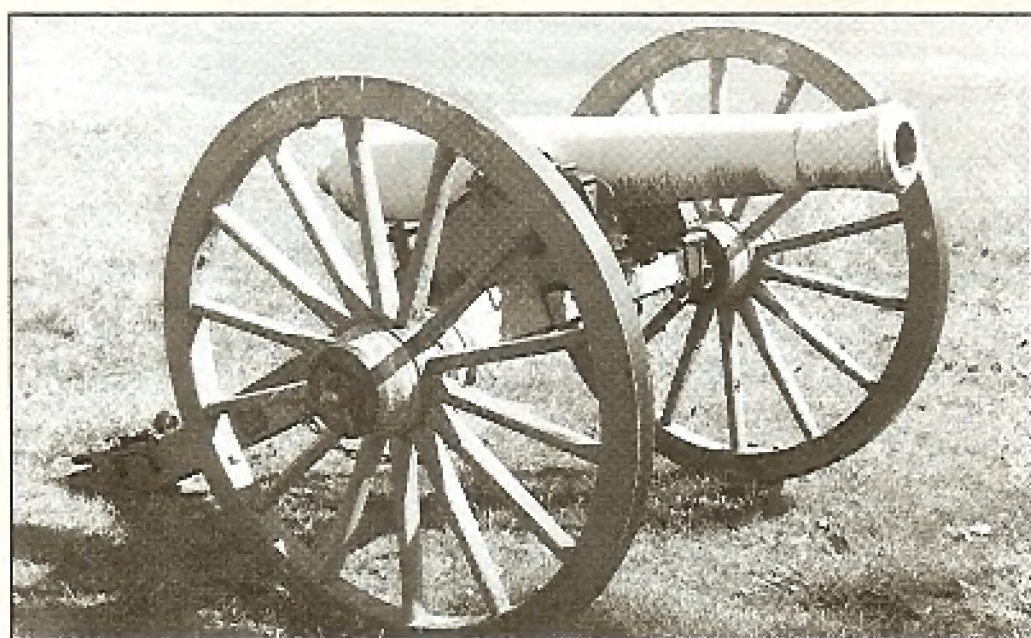
In Sharpsburg, Lee's men were camped in wooded farmland. They faced Antietam Creek and had their backs to the Potomac River. Lee was still missing part of his army, the Light Division under General Hill.

The Union army was 87,000 strong, divided into six infantry corps and a cavalry command. Lee's army, 40,000 strong, was made up of smaller units, divisions, and brigades, under Generals Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and James Longstreet.

McClellan's main attack would be at the northern end of Lee's line, against Jackson. Four infantry corps would attack, two from the north and two from the east. At the southern end, General Ambrose Burnside would attack. In the center, McClellan's infantry corps would attack straight across the creek.

The Union attack began at dawn. General "Fighting Joe" Hooker advanced toward Dunker Church, fighting through the North Woods into a cornfield. They were counter-attacked by John Bell Hood's Texas Brigade

Cannon like this were used by both sides (NARA)



LEFT At the battle of Antietam, on 17 September 1862, the Union Army far outnumbered the Confederates. Despite this, the Confederates were able to defend against several Union attacks, before retreating to Virginia when they could fight no more.



Confederate general Robert E. Lee was in charge of the Confederate Army for the whole of the war. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)

and were thrown back. The cornfield would change hands over a dozen times that day.

At 9:00 A.M., the Union II Corps joined the attack. Some, under General Edwin "Bull" Sumner, turned toward the church. They were hit by Jackson's last reserves in the West Woods. A horrified Sumner told General Franklin not to attack. McClellan agreed. Yet unbeknown to them, Jackson was beaten. He had run out of troops and ammunition.

Meanwhile, the last of Sumner's men veered toward the center of the battlefield. There, Confederates, dug in along a sunken road, shot them down as they advanced.

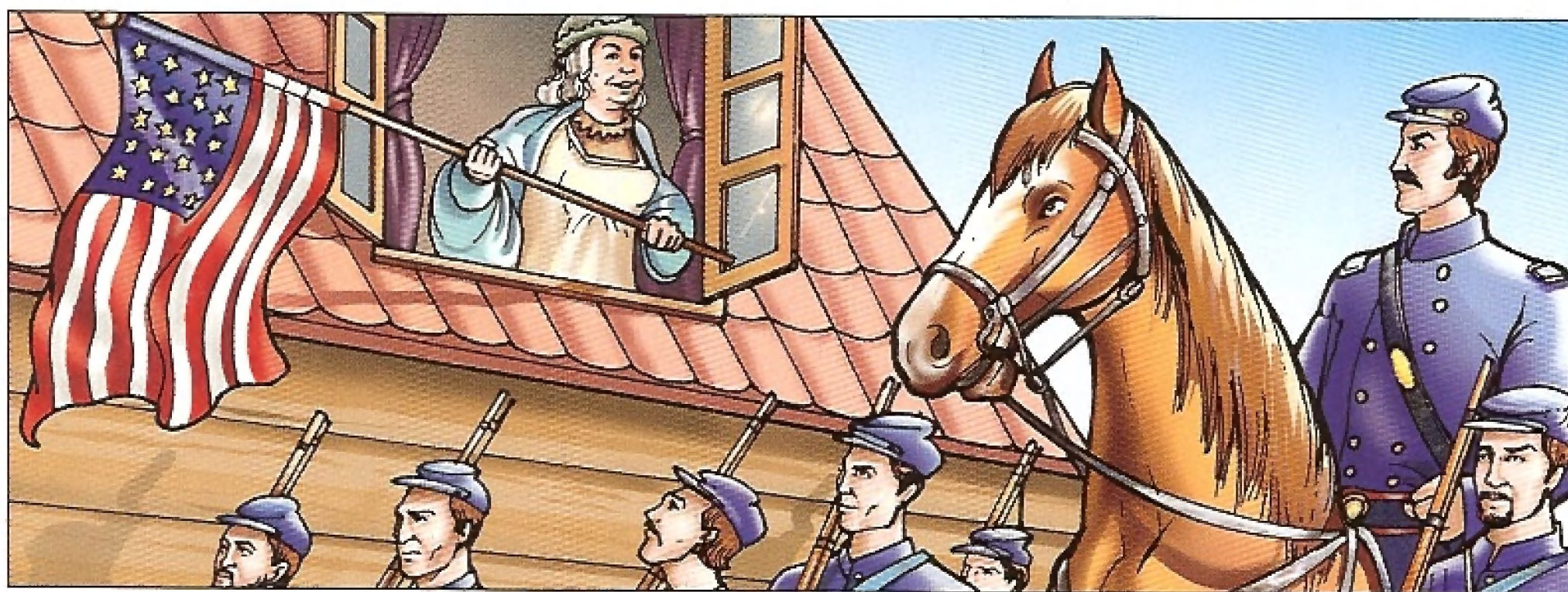
By 1:00 P.M., two Union regiments had fought their way through. Hundreds of Confederates were killed.

Burnside, meanwhile, had begun his attack at 10:00 A.M., advancing across a bridge. By 1:00 P.M., he had captured it, and pressed on. Then, at 4:00 P.M., Hill's Light Division finally reached the battlefield and drove Burnside's men back to the bridge.

At that point, the battle ended. Neither side wished to continue the bloodiest day of battle ever fought on American soil.

BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

IN SEPTEMBER 1862, CONFEDERATE TROOPS FLED THE TOWN OF FREDERICK, MARYLAND, AS THE UNION ARMY APPROACHED.



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER WROTE THE POEM "BARBARA FRIETCHIE."

THE REAL STORY IS NOT NEARLY AS UPLIFTING - AND A LOT BLOODIER.

AMERICAN CHILDREN WOULD LEARN ABOUT THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM FROM THIS POEM. HOWEVER, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE TRUTH IN IT.



ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1862, UNION TROOPS ENTERED FREDERICK. THEY CAMPED ON THE SAME GROUNDS THAT THE CONFEDERATES HAD USED.



THE NEXT MORNING, CORPORAL MITCHELL AND A SERGEANT FROM THE 27TH INDIANA FOUND THREE CIGARS WRAPPED IN A SHEET OF PAPER.



SHORTLY, AT GENERAL MCCLELLAN'S HEADQUARTERS . . .





AT THE BATTLE OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN, FOUGHT ON SEPTEMBER 14, MCCLELLAN ATTACKED CAUTIOUSLY. HE SENT PART OF HIS ARMY WESTWARD THROUGH A MOUNTAIN GAP TO ENGAGE LEE.



THE PLAN MIGHT HAVE WORKED HAD HE USED ALL THE TROOPS HE HAD AVAILABLE.



HOWEVER, ROBERT E. LEE WAS ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH HIS ARMY INTACT.

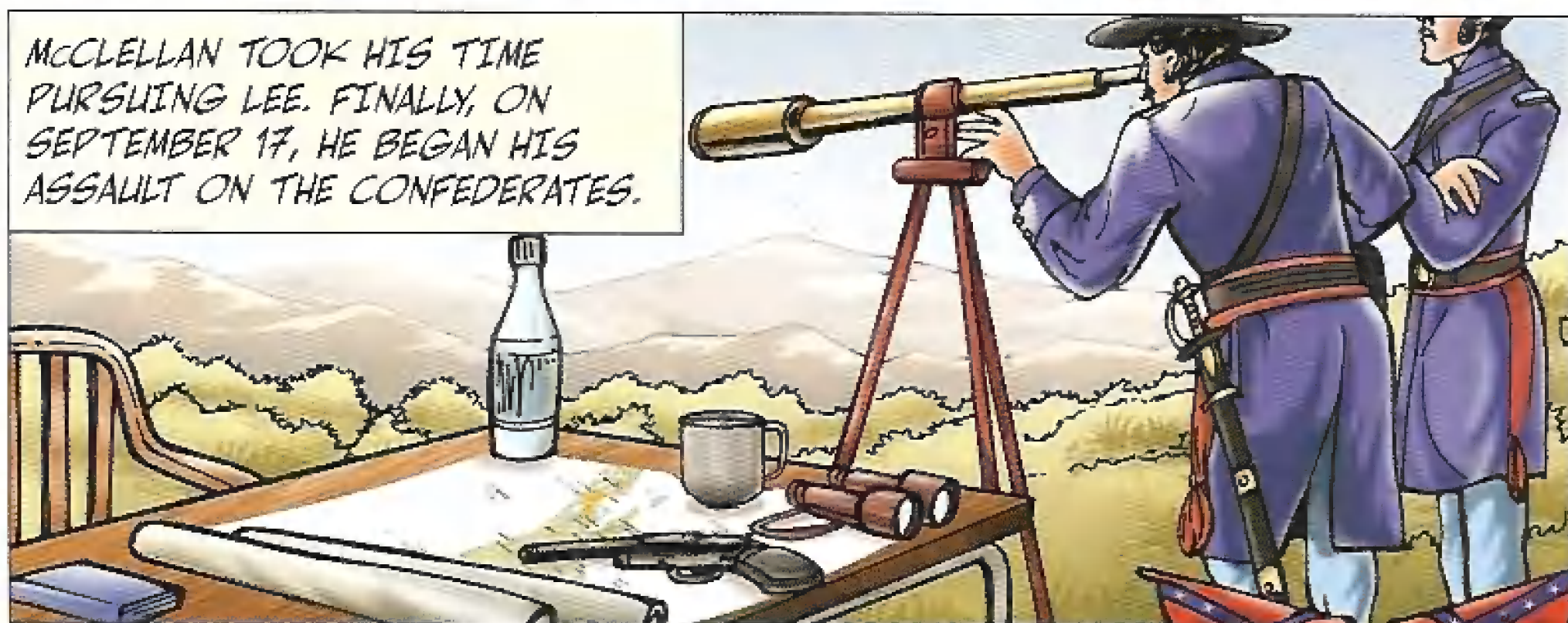


PERHAPS LEE FELT THAT HE COULD NOT RETURN TO VIRGINIA WITHOUT A CLEAR-CUT VICTORY, SO HE DECIDED TO STAND AND FIGHT.

LEE REGROUPED HIS FORCES AND SET UP DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AROUND THE TOWN OF SHARPSBURG, ABOUT 30 MILES NORTHWEST OF FREDERICK.



MCCLELLAN TOOK HIS TIME PURSUING LEE. FINALLY, ON SEPTEMBER 17, HE BEGAN HIS ASSAULT ON THE CONFEDERATES.



MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF MAKING THE INITIAL ATTACK AT THE CONFEDERATE LEFT . . .



. . . WHERE STONEWALL JACKSON WAS IN COMMAND.

AT 6:15 A.M., HOOKER'S TROOPS CAME OUT OF THE NORTH WOODS AFTER A NIGHT OF SKIRMISHING BETWEEN PICKETS ON BOTH SIDES.

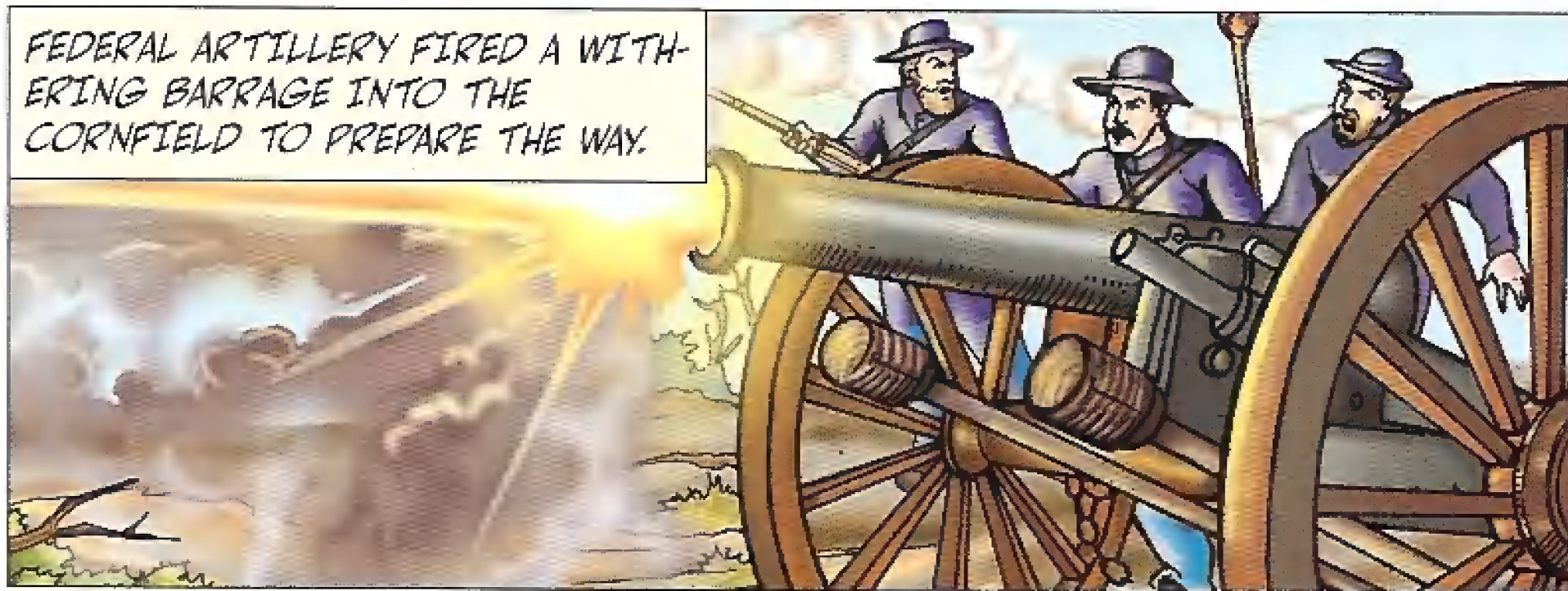
THEY WERE FACING A 40-ACRE FIELD OF CORN. FROM THAT DAY ON, IT WOULD BE KNOWN SIMPLY AS "THE CORNFIELD."



GENERAL HOOKER SAW CONFEDERATE BAYONETS GLEAMING ABOVE THE TALL CORN. HE KNEW "THE FIELD WAS FILLED WITH THE ENEMY."



FEDERAL ARTILLERY FIRED A WITH-ERING BARRAGE INTO THE CORNFIELD TO PREPARE THE WAY.



LATER, HOOKER WROTE THAT "... EVERY STALK ... WAS CUT AS CLOSELY AS COULD HAVE BEEN DONE WITH A KNIFE."



WHEN THE ROAR OF THE ARTILLERY DIED DOWN, THE UNION INFANTRY ADVANCED INTO THE CORNFIELD.

OH, MY...



THE SIGHT OF THE DEAD CONFEDERATES ONLY REMINDED THE UNION SOLDIERS THAT THEY WERE MARCHING INTO RANGE OF THE ENEMY'S GUNS.

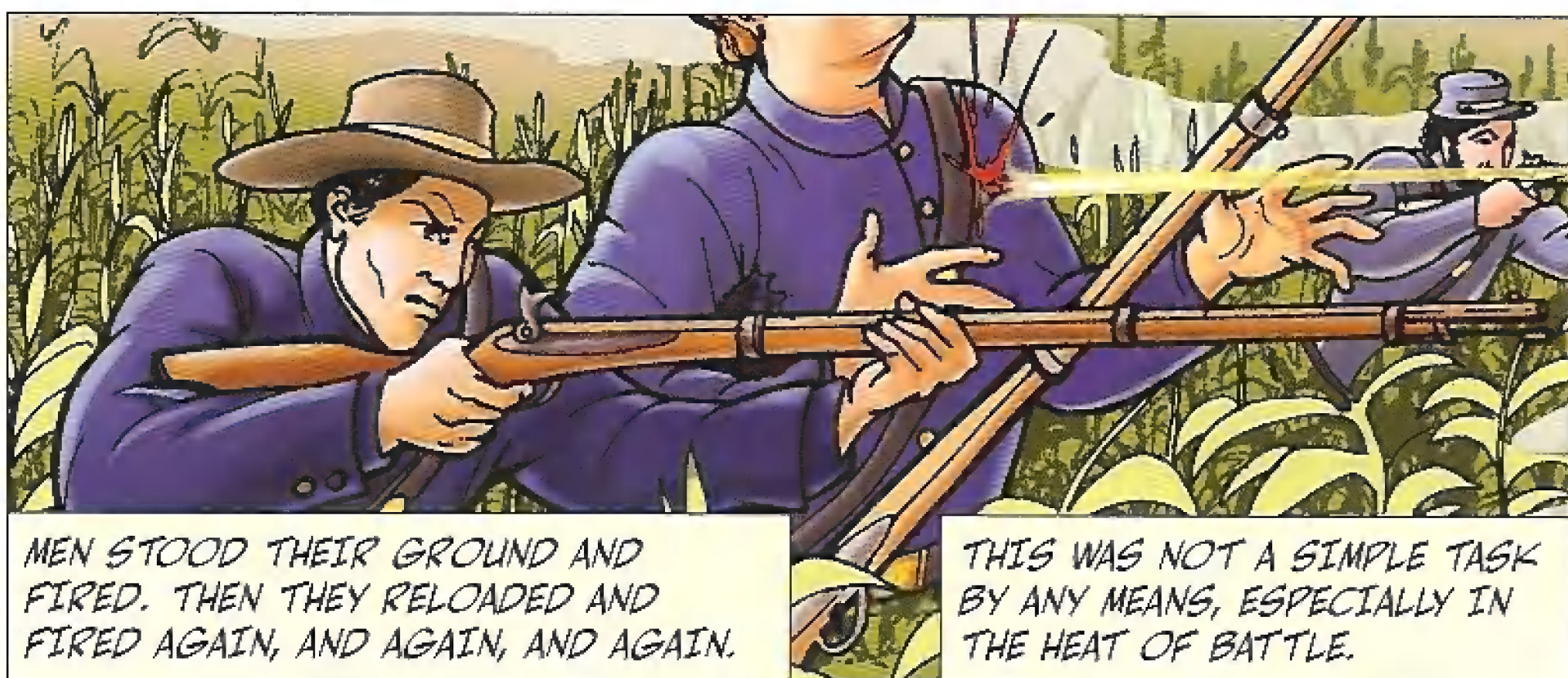


THE MEN THREW AWAY THEIR PLAYING CARDS RATHER THAN MEET THEIR MAKER WITH SUCH "SINFUL" OBJECTS IN THEIR POSSESSION.

SOME OF THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS TOOK PLACE AT A RANGE OF 30 YARDS OR LESS.



FIRE AT WILL!



MEN STOOD THEIR GROUND AND FIRED. THEN THEY RELOADED AND FIRED AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN.

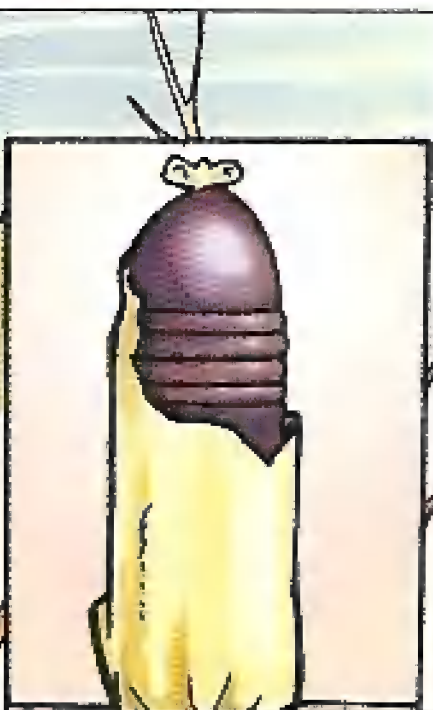
THIS WAS NOT A SIMPLE TASK BY ANY MEANS, ESPECIALLY IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE.

BOTH ARMIES WERE ARMED WITH RIFLE MUSKETS.



THE RIFLE WAS HELD MUZZLE UP. THE SOLDIER REACHED INTO A CASE ON HIS BELT AND TOOK OUT A CARTRIDGE . . .

. . . WHICH WAS A PAPER CYLINDER THAT HELD THE LEAD BULLET AND GUNPOWDER.



HE HAD TO RIP THE CARTRIDGE WITH HIS TEETH.



NEXT, HE POURED THE GUNPOWDER DOWN THE BARREL AND STUFFED THE BULLET INTO THE MUZZLE.



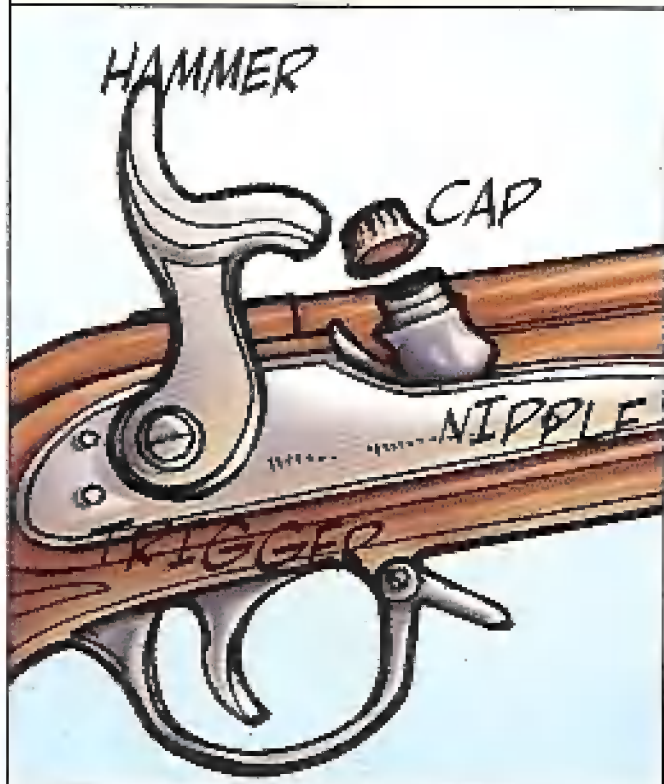
HE USED THE RAMROD TO JAM BULLET, PAPER, AND GUNPOWDER DOWN THE BARREL.



THE RAMROD WAS THEN REPLACED USING JUST THE LITTLE FINGER.



THE HAMMER WAS DRAWN TO HALF COCK AND A PERCUSSION CAP WAS PLACED ON THE NIPPLE.



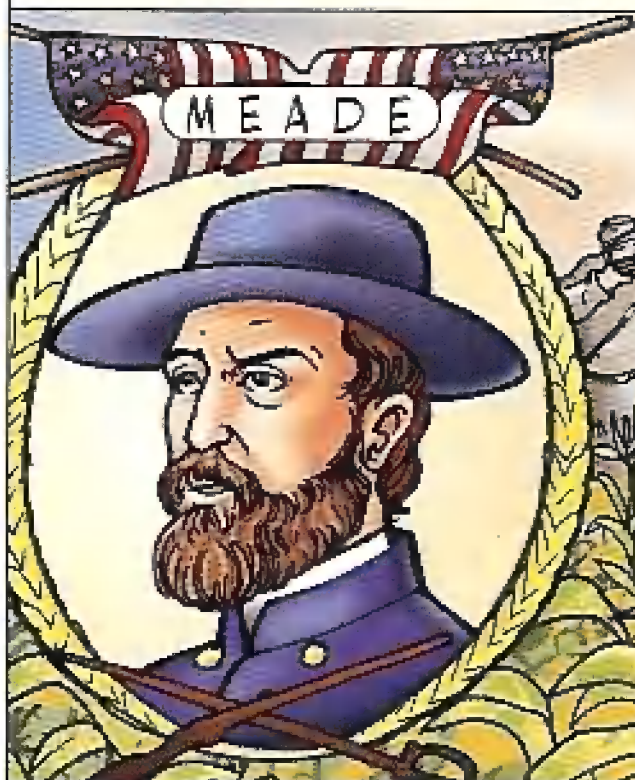
THE RIFLE WAS SHOULDERED, BROUGHT TO FULL COCK, AIMED . . .



. . . AND FIRED.



UNION MAJOR GENERAL
GEORGE MEADE LED A
DIVISION OF
PENNSYLVANIANS AT THE
CENTER OF THE ATTACK.



A GEORGIA REGIMENT ROSE OUT OF THE
CORN 30 FEET AWAY. THEY KNOCKED OUT HALF A
REGIMENT OF PENNSYLVANIANS IN ONE VOLLEY.



THE UNION SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETREAT,
BUT A YOUNG PRIVATE STOPPED THEM.

ARE YOU GOING
TO RUN LIKE DOGS,
OR DIE LIKE MEN?!



THE MEN RALLIED TO
HIM, THE LINE WAS
RE-FORMED . . .



. . . AND HELD.

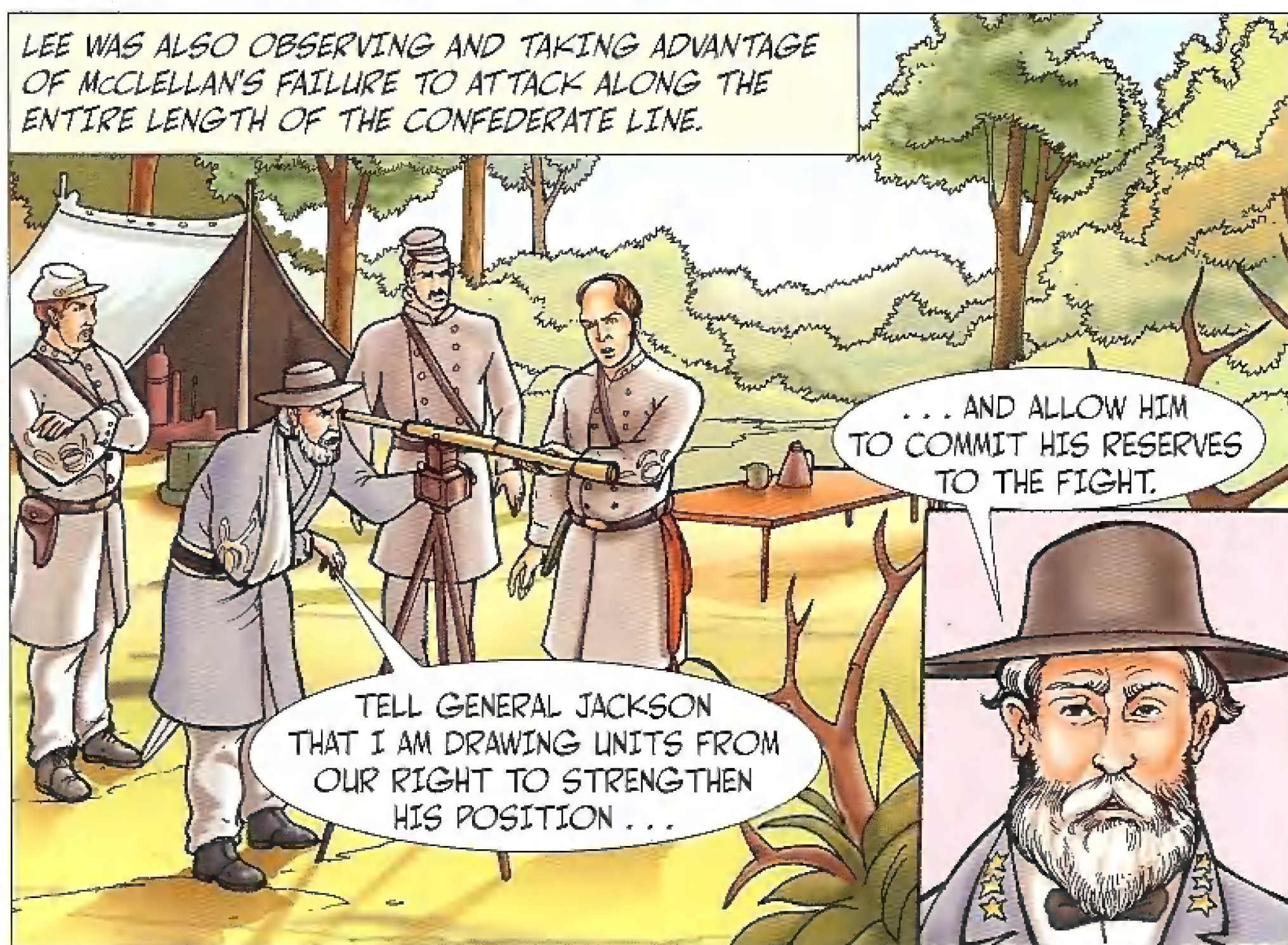
THEN THEY
ADVANCED.



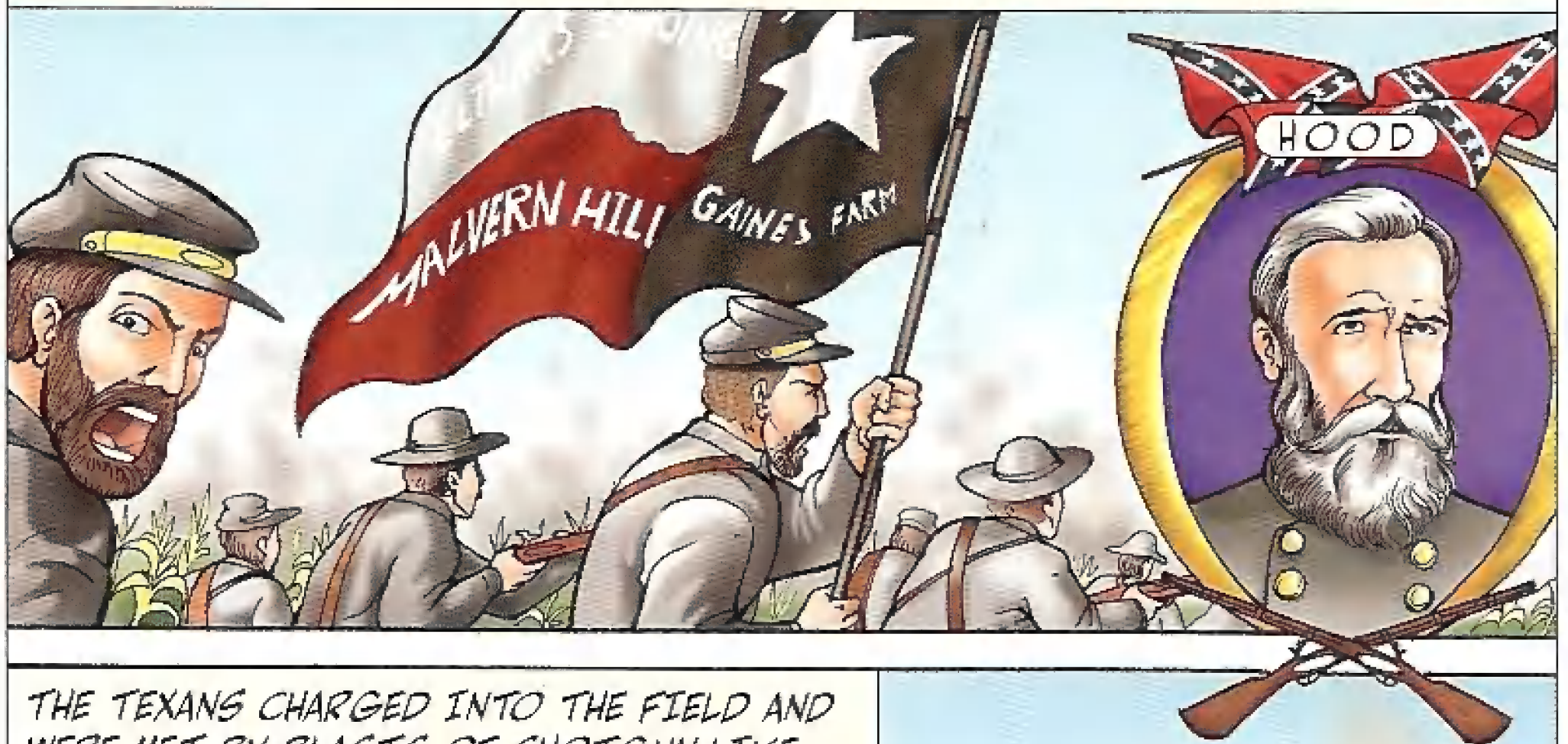
MEANWHILE, MCCLELLAN AND HIS STAFF
WERE OBSERVING THE BATTLE FROM
THEIR HILLTOP HEADQUARTERS.



LEE WAS ALSO OBSERVING AND TAKING ADVANTAGE
OF MCCLELLAN'S FAILURE TO ATTACK ALONG THE
ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE CONFEDERATE LINE.



THOSE RESERVES WERE THE TEXAS BRIGADE. THEY WERE COMMANDED BY BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN BELL HOOD.



THE TEXANS CHARGED INTO THE FIELD AND WERE MET BY BLASTS OF SHOTGUN-LIKE CANISTERS FIRED BY UNION ARTILLERY.



OVER AND OVER, THE TEXAS LONE STAR FLAG WAS SHOT DOWN.



OVER AND OVER, THE FLAG WAS TAKEN BACK UP TO LEAD THE WAY.



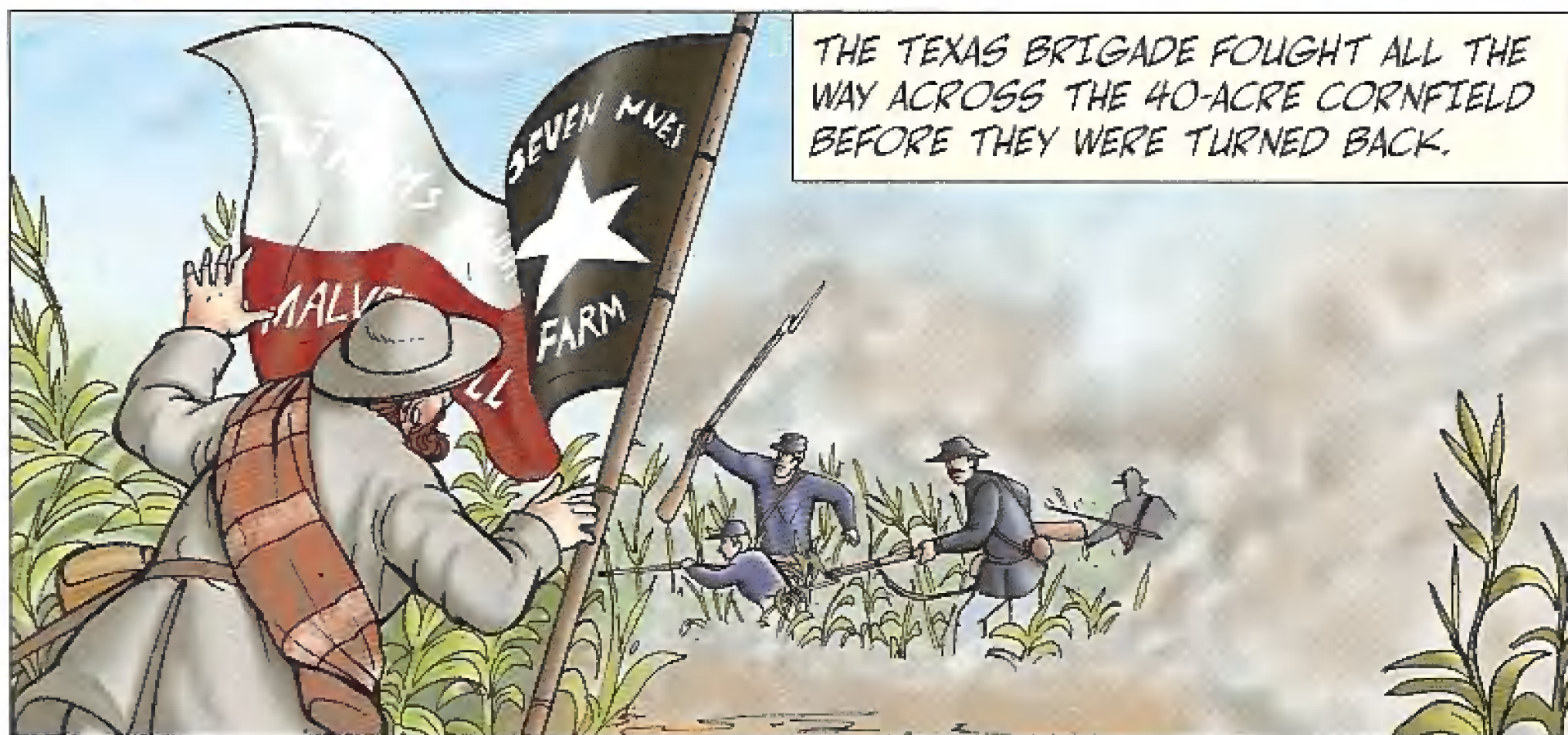
AS THE TEXANS CHARGED, THE UNION TROOPS FELL BACK, GIVING UP THEIR HARD-EARNED GROUND.



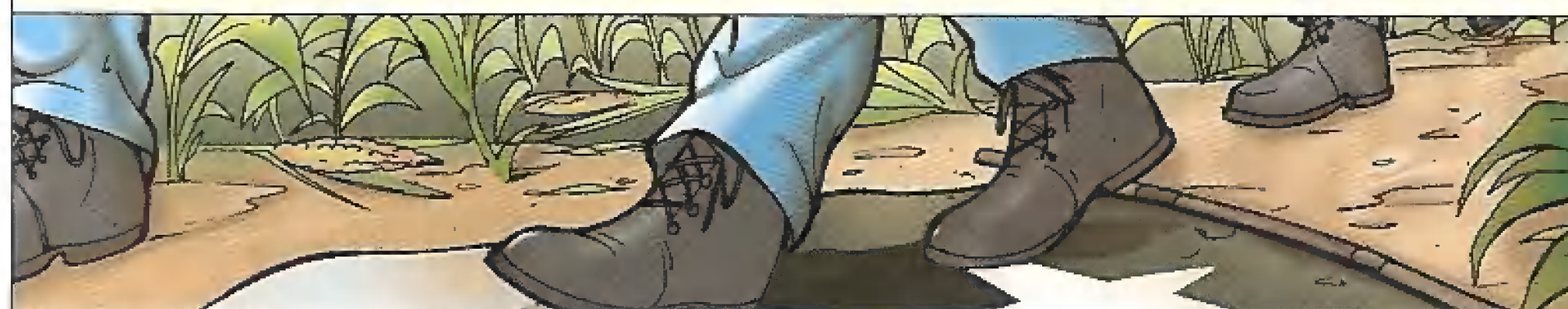
A COLONEL OF THE 17TH GEORGIA SAID, "NOT ONE SHOWED ANY DISPOSITION, NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR TERRIBLE LOSS, TO FALL BACK OR FLINCH FROM THE ENEMY."



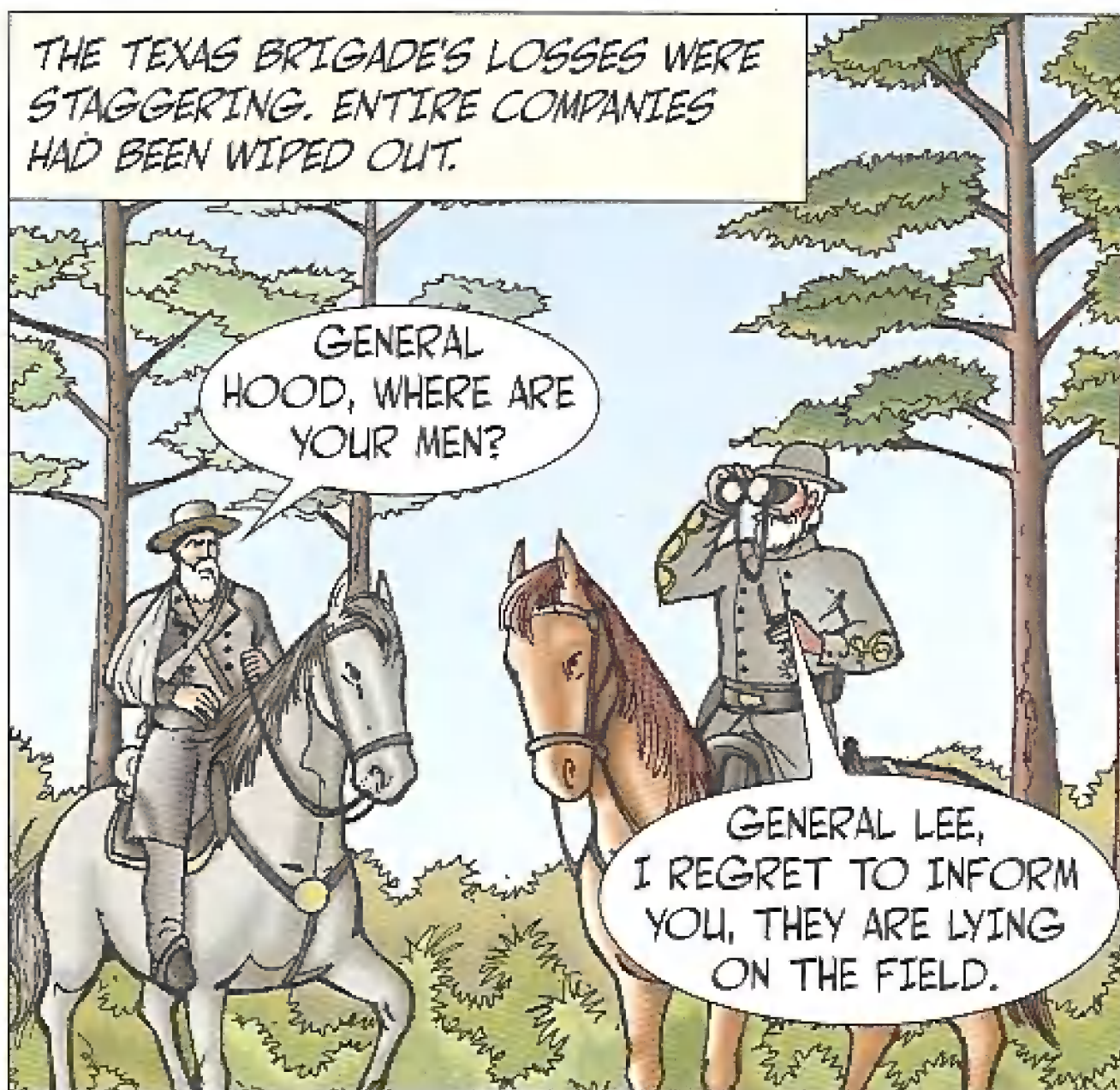
THE TEXAS BRIGADE FOUGHT ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE 40-ACRE CORNFIELD BEFORE THEY WERE TURNED BACK.



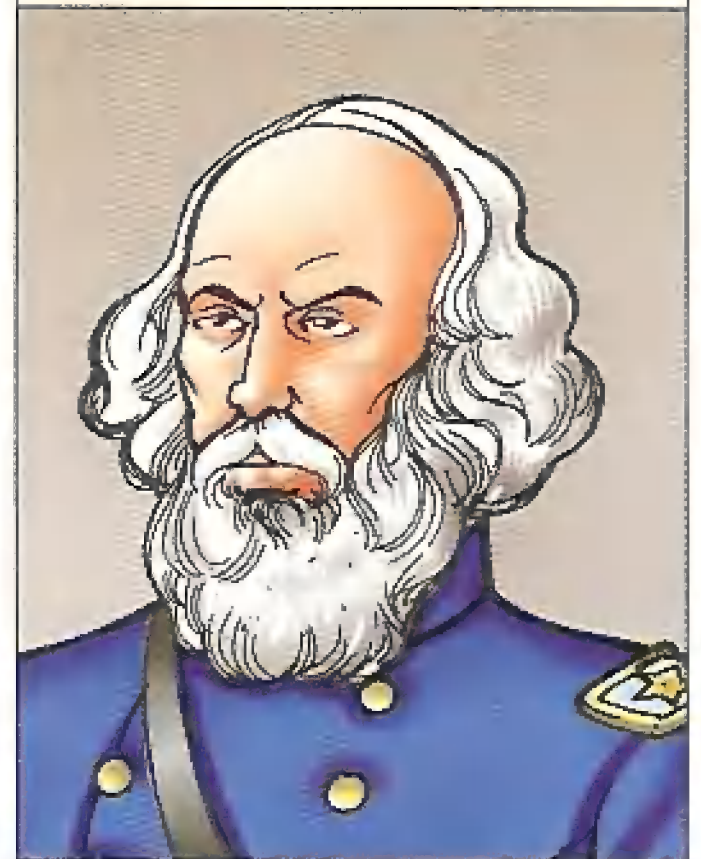
GENERAL HOOKER WROTE IN HIS REPORT, "IT WAS NEVER MY FORTUNE TO WITNESS A MORE BLOODY, DISMAL BATTLEFIELD."



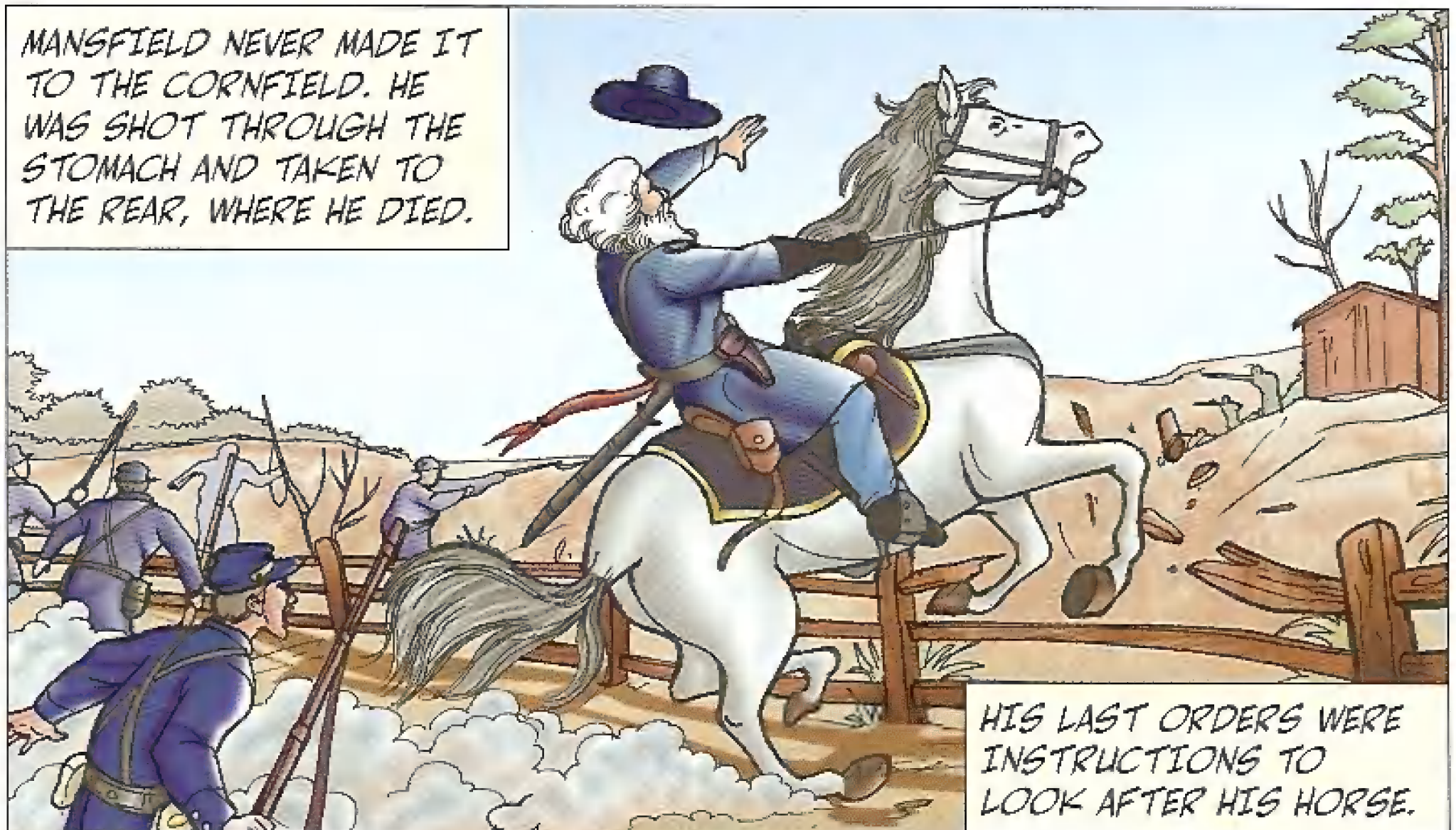
THE TEXAS BRIGADE'S LOSSES WERE STAGGERING. ENTIRE COMPANIES HAD BEEN WIPED OUT.



MEANWHILE, UNION MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH K. F. MANSFIELD LED HIS TWO DIVISIONS THROUGH THE EAST WOODS TO THE FIGHT.



MANSFIELD NEVER MADE IT TO THE CORNFIELD. HE WAS SHOT THROUGH THE STOMACH AND TAKEN TO THE REAR, WHERE HE DIED.



ONE OF THE UNITS UNDER MANSFIELD'S COMMAND WAS THE 27TH INDIANA.



THE INDIANA BOYS STOOD
THEIR GROUND IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE CORNFIELD.



EACH MAN USED UP ALL HIS AMMUNITION,
100 ROUNDS PER MAN, THEN SEARCHED THE
DEAD AND WOUNDED FOR MORE.



THEY FIRED THEIR MUSKETS FOR SO
LONG THAT THE GUNS BECAME TOO
HOT TO HANDLE.



ONE OF THE WOUNDED WAS
CORPORAL MITCHELL, WHO HAD
FOUND THE LOST ORDER
WRAPPED AROUND THE CIGARS.

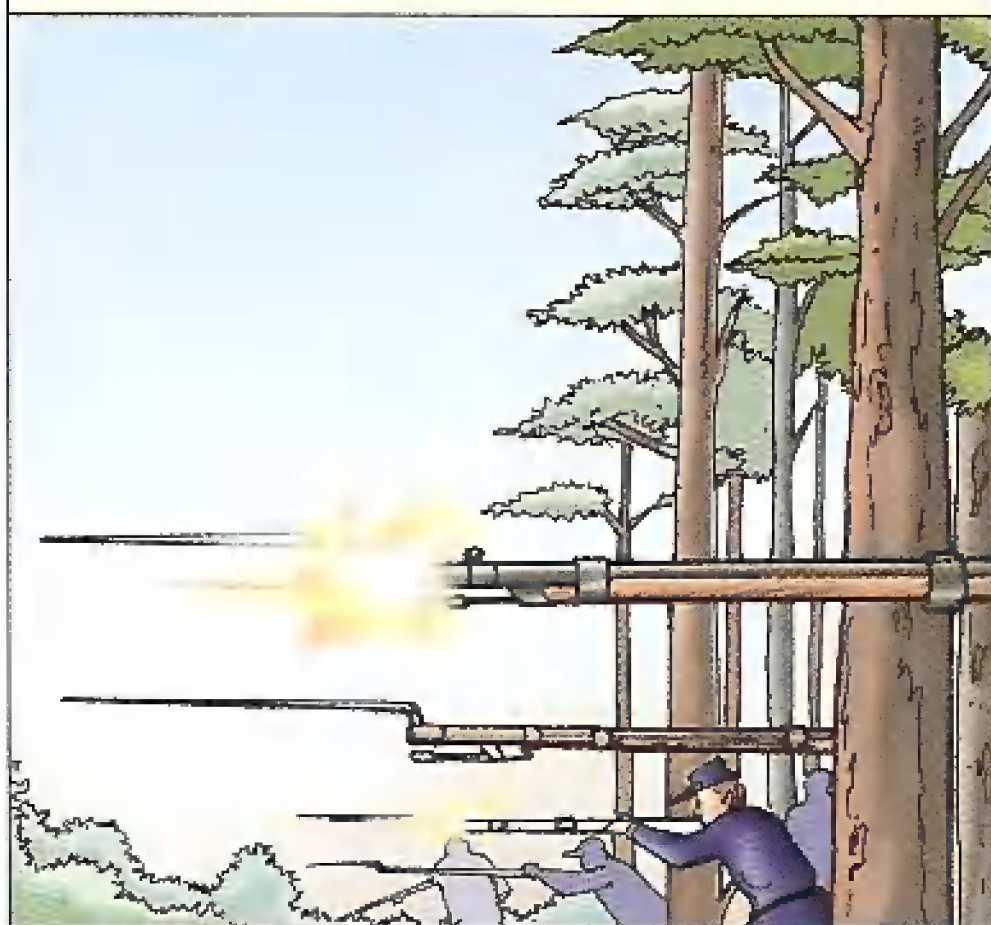


POSSESSION OF THE CORNFIELD WENT BACK AND FORTH ALL MORNING.

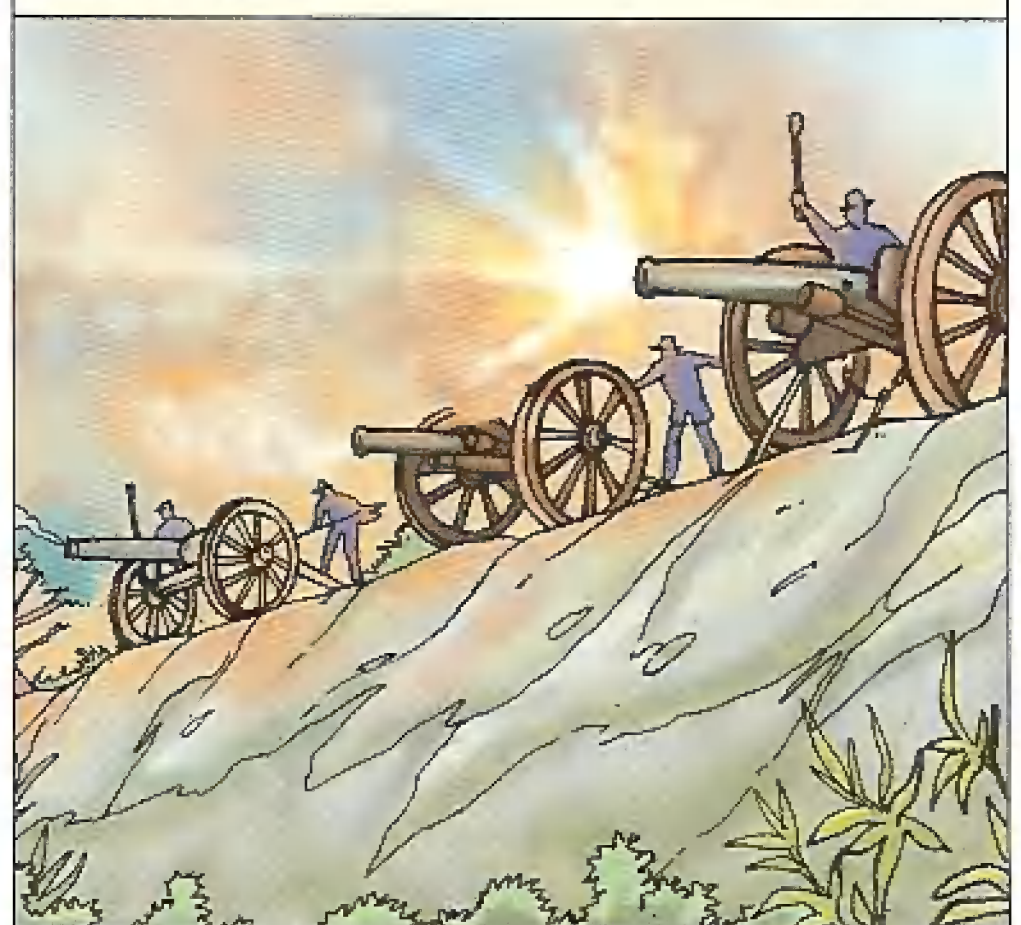


THE CONFEDERATES MADE ONE LAST CHARGE. THEY HOPED TO CARRY ALL THE WAY ACROSS TO THE NORTH WOODS.

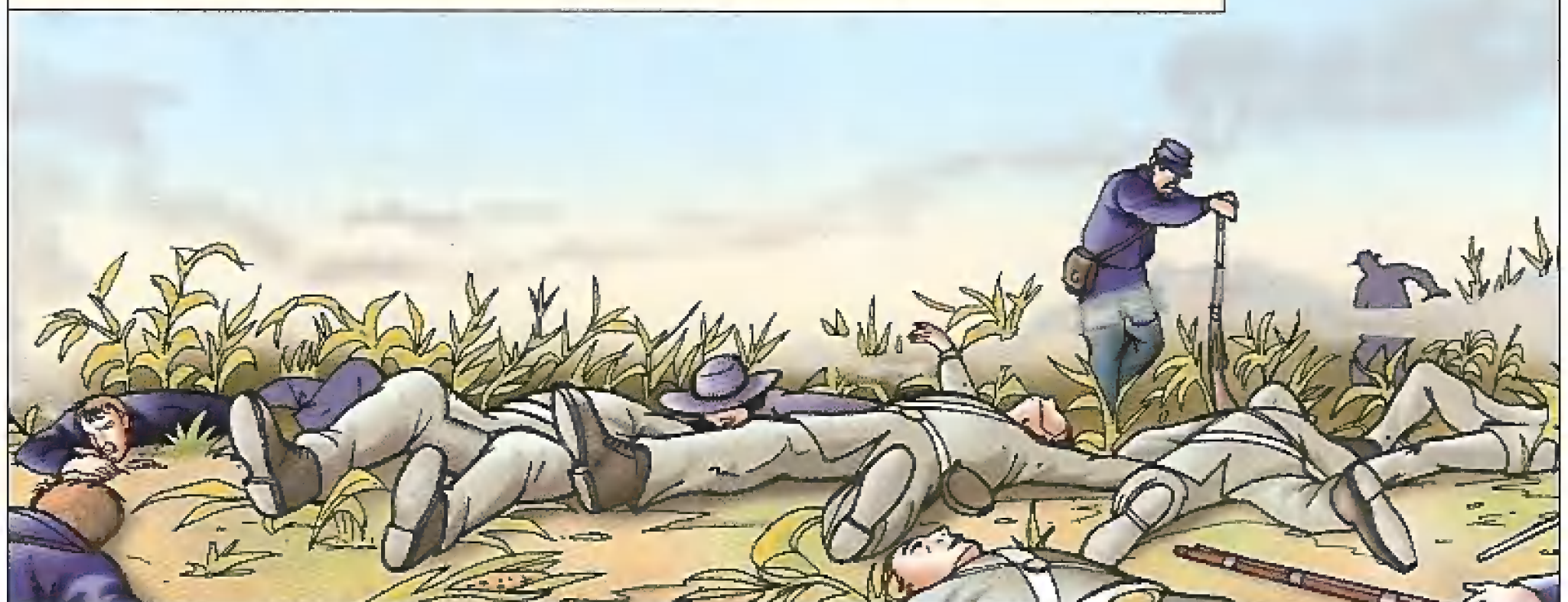
BUT THEY WERE CAUGHT BETWEEN A MURDEROUS VOLLEY OF RIFLE FIRE FROM THE EAST WOODS . . .



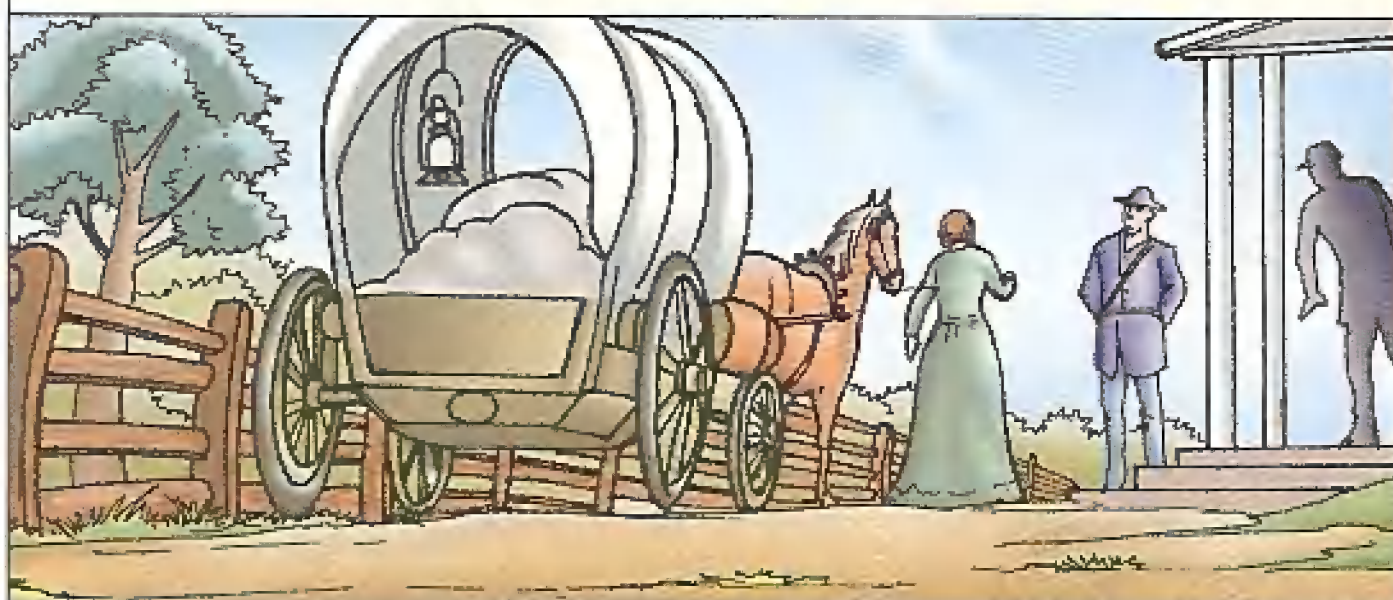
. . . AND A BARRAGE OF ARTILLERY FROM THE SLOPE NORTH OF THE CORNFIELD.



BARELY FOUR HOURS AFTER THE FIRST SHOT WAS FIRED, CLOSE TO 12,000 MEN LAY DEAD OR WOUNDED IN THE CORNFIELD AS WELL AS THE NEARBY WOODS AND FARMYARDS.



AROUND NOON, CLARA BARTON, A FORMER CLERK FOR THE U.S. PATENT OFFICE, ARRIVED AT THE NORTH END OF THE CORNFIELD WITH A WAGON FULL OF BANDAGES.



UNTIL HER ARRIVAL, THE SURGEONS HAD BEEN DRESSING WOUNDS WITH CORN HUSKS.

BARTON STAYED TO COMFORT AND TEND TO THE WOUNDED.



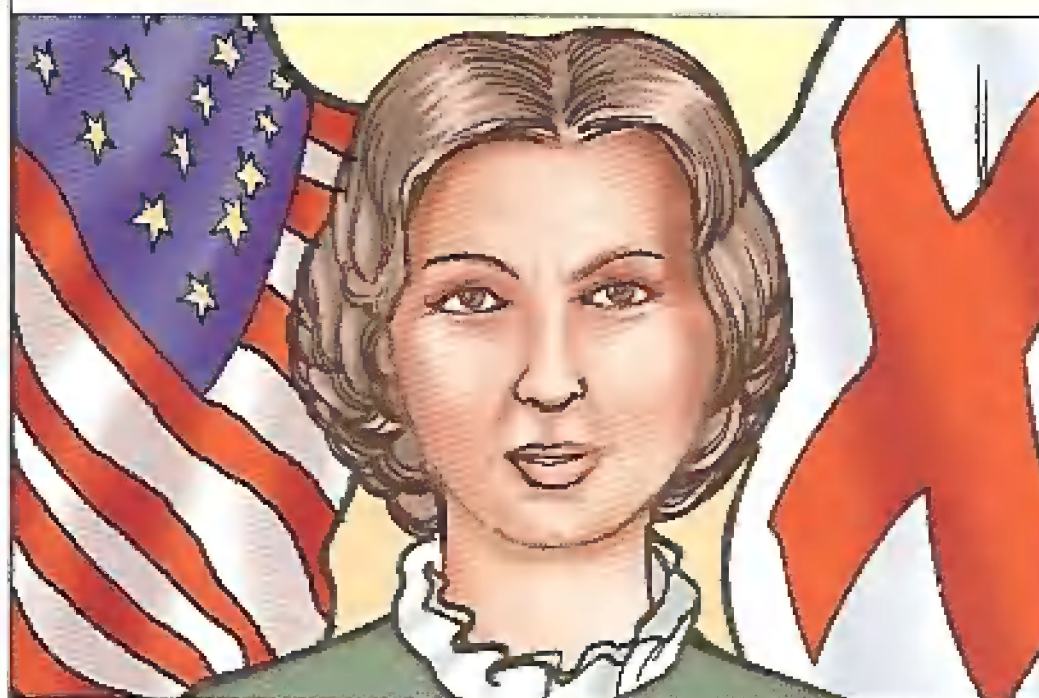
A STRAY BULLET KILLED A MAN AS SHE GAVE HIM A DRINK OF WATER.



THE BULLET HAD PASSED THROUGH BARTON'S SLEEVE BEFORE HITTING THE MAN.

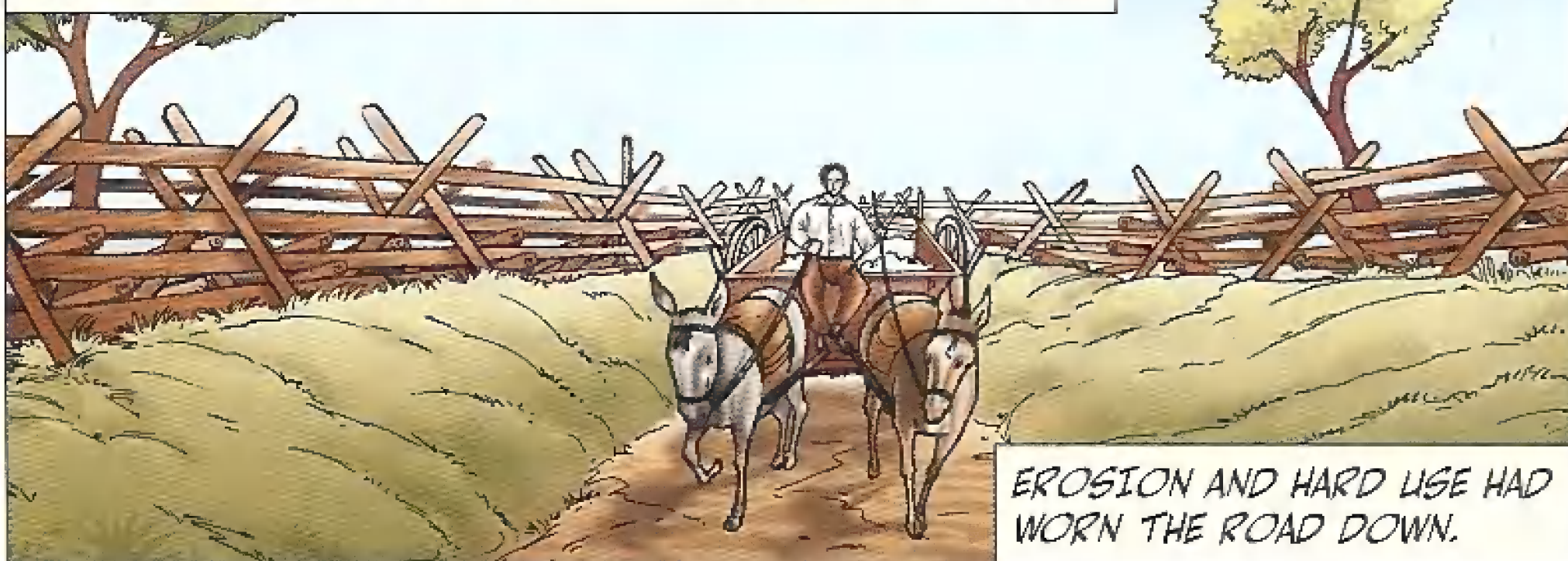


BRAVELY, CLARA BARTON CONTINUED HER WORK THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT.



SHE WOULD LATER GO ON TO FOUND THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IN 1881.

SOUTH OF THE DUNKER CHURCH WAS A COUNTRY ROAD THAT ZIGZAGGED SOUTHWEST FOR LESS THAN A MILE.



EROSION AND HARD USE HAD WORN THE ROAD DOWN.

THIS SUNKEN ROAD BECAME THE CENTER OF LEE'S DEFENSIVE LINE.

THE TROOPS IN THE SUNKEN ROAD WERE TOTALLY PROTECTED.



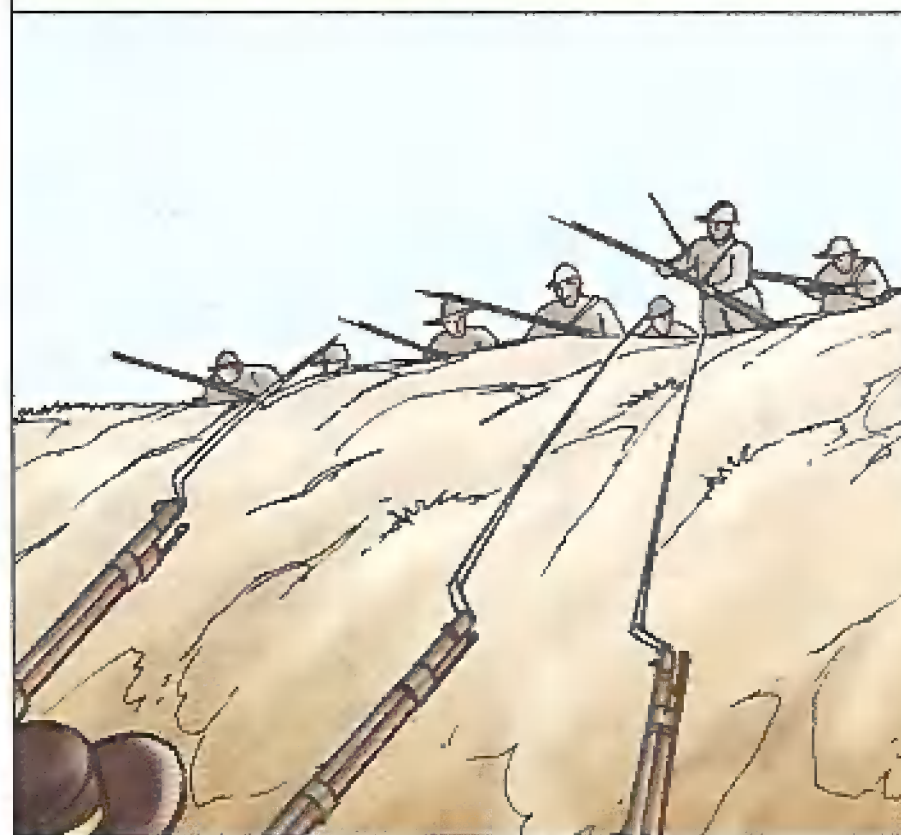
ATTACKERS WOULD BE COMPLETELY IN THE OPEN.

TWO DIVISIONS OF UNION TROOPS UNDER GENERALS FRENCH AND RICHARDSON WERE ABOUT TO ASSAULT THE SUNKEN ROAD AS THE BATTLE RAGED IN THE CORNFIELD.

... UNION GENERALS FRENCH AND RICHARDSON SHOULD HAVE BEEN NORTH, SUPPORTING GENERAL SUMNER AS HE SOUGHT TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE CORNFIELD.



THERE HAD BEEN CONFUSION AT HIGHER LEVELS OF COMMAND...



THOUSANDS OF MEN WOULD PAY IN BLOOD FOR THE ERROR.

ONE OF THE CONFEDERATE REGIMENTS IN THE SUNKEN ROAD WAS THE 6TH ALABAMA, COMMANDED BY COLONEL JOHN B. GORDON.



GORDON



HOLD YOUR FIRE, BOYS, UNTIL YOU CAN SEE THE EAGLES ON THEIR BELT BUCKLES!

UNION COLONEL FRANCIS BARLOW COMMANDED THE NEW YORK REGIMENTS THAT WERE IN THE SIGHTS OF THE ALABAMA TROOPS.

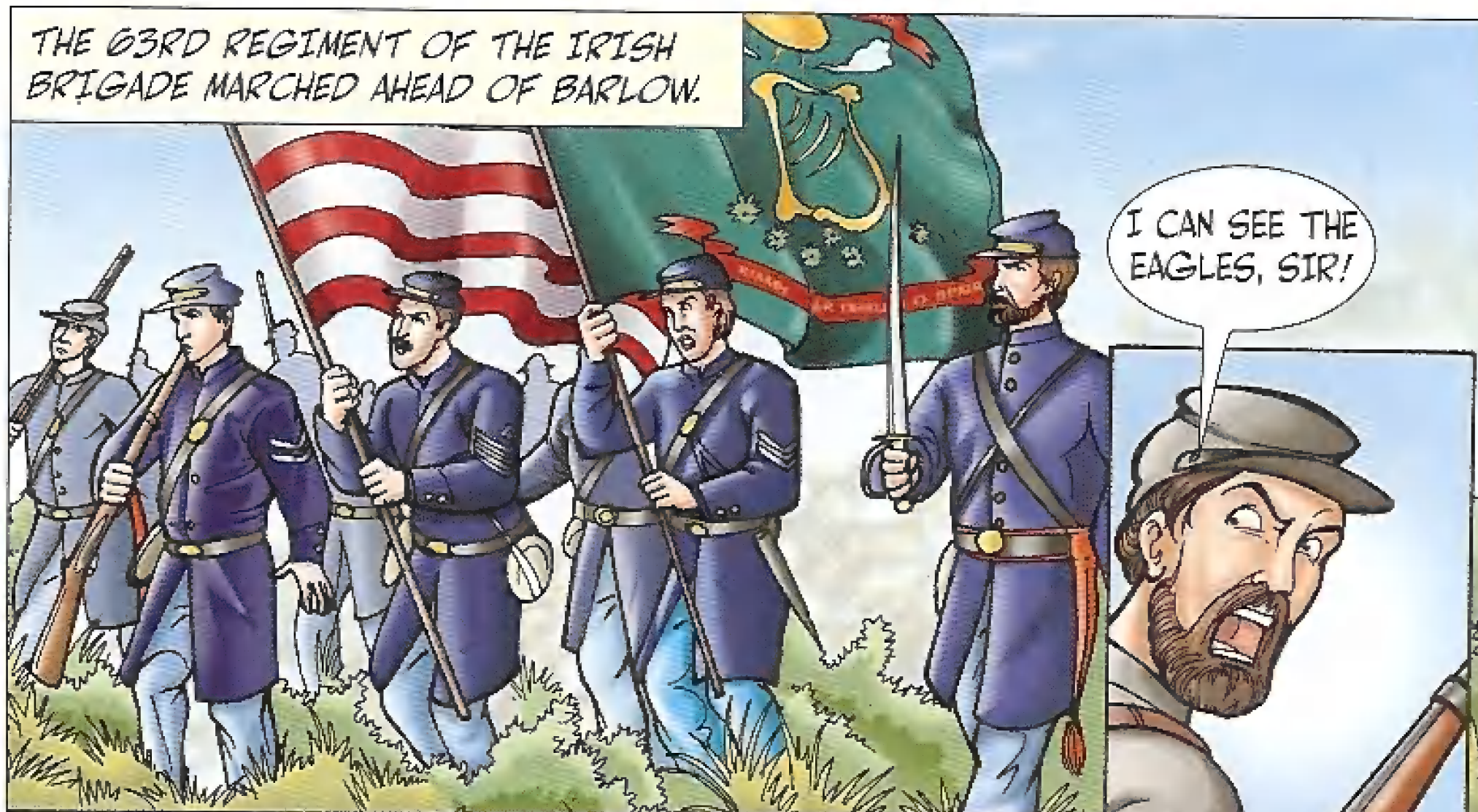
EARLIER, GORDON HAD PROMISED LEE THAT HIS MEN WOULD STAY PUT "TILL THE SUN GOES DOWN OR VICTORY IS WON!"

TIRED OF HIS DRUMMER BOYS "SHIRKING THEIR DUTY," BARLOW HAD TAKEN TO TYING THE BOYS TO HIMSELF.



NEVER LET THEM SEE YOUR FEAR, BOYS.

THE 63RD REGIMENT OF THE IRISH
BRIGADE MARCHED AHEAD OF BARLOW.



FIRE!

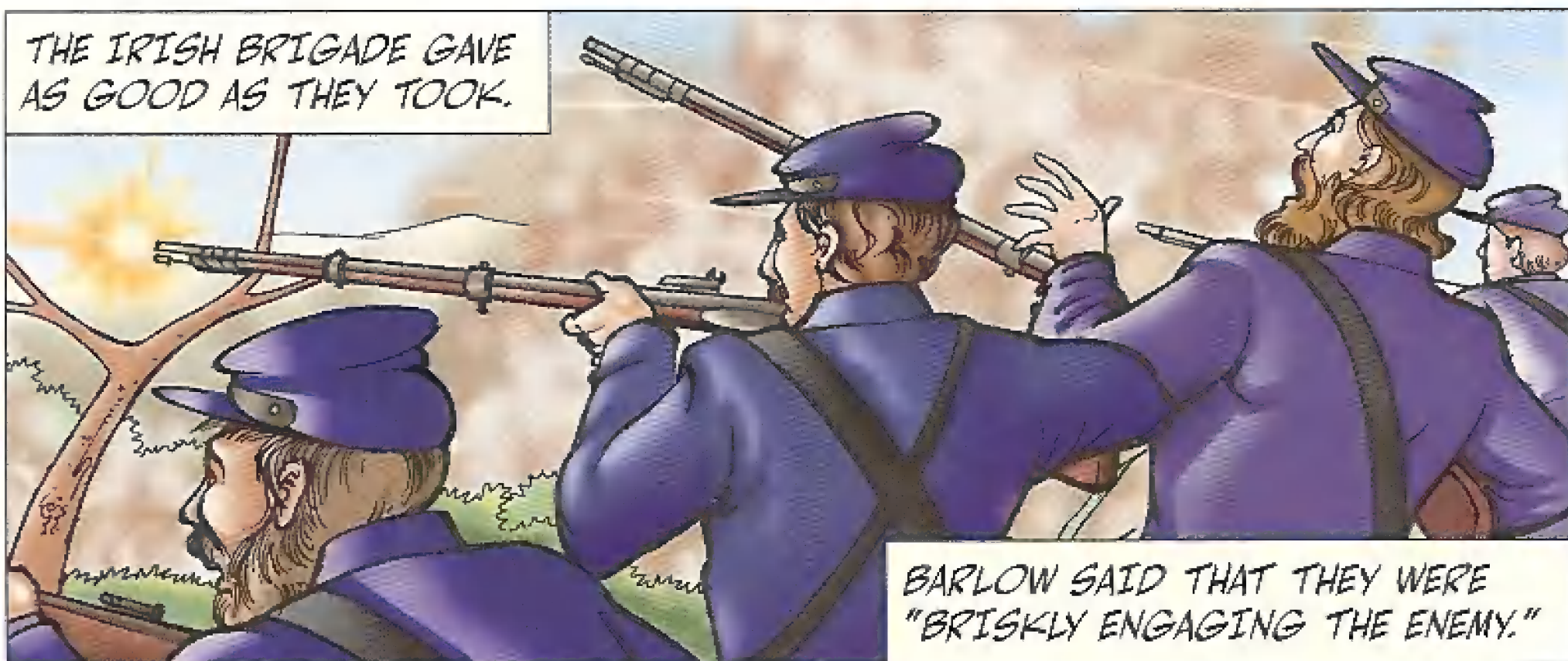
THE CONFEDERATES LET LOOSE
A TREMENDOUS VOLLEY.



LATER, GORDON WOULD SAY THAT "THE ENTIRE FRONT LINE, WITH
FEW EXCEPTIONS, WENT DOWN IN OUR CONSUMING BLAST."

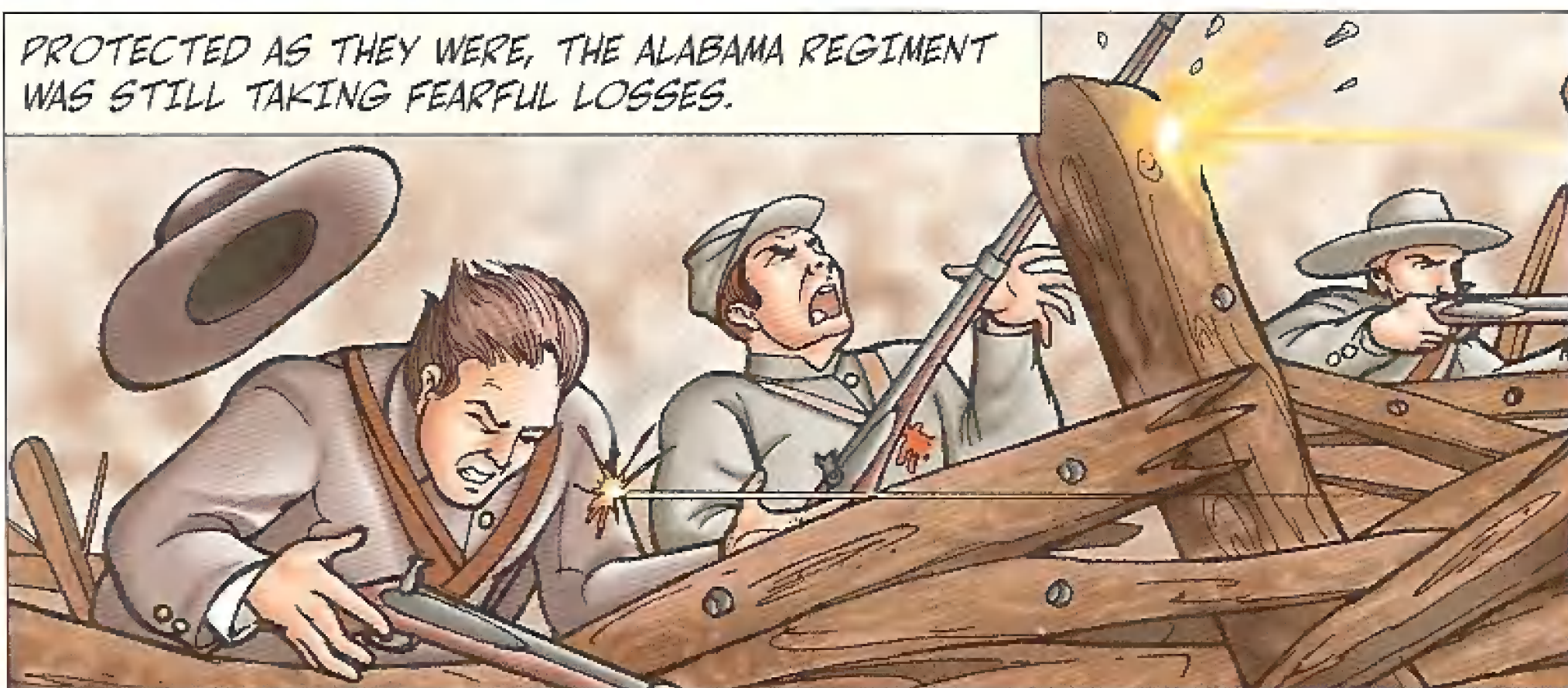


THE IRISH BRIGADE GAVE
AS GOOD AS THEY TOOK.



BARLOW SAID THAT THEY WERE
"BRISKLY ENGAGING THE ENEMY."

PROTECTED AS THEY WERE, THE ALABAMA REGIMENT
WAS STILL TAKING FEARFUL LOSSES.



COLONEL GORDON WAS SHOT
THROUGH HIS RIGHT CALF. THE
OFFICER HE WAS SPEAKING TO WAS
NOT SO LUCKY.

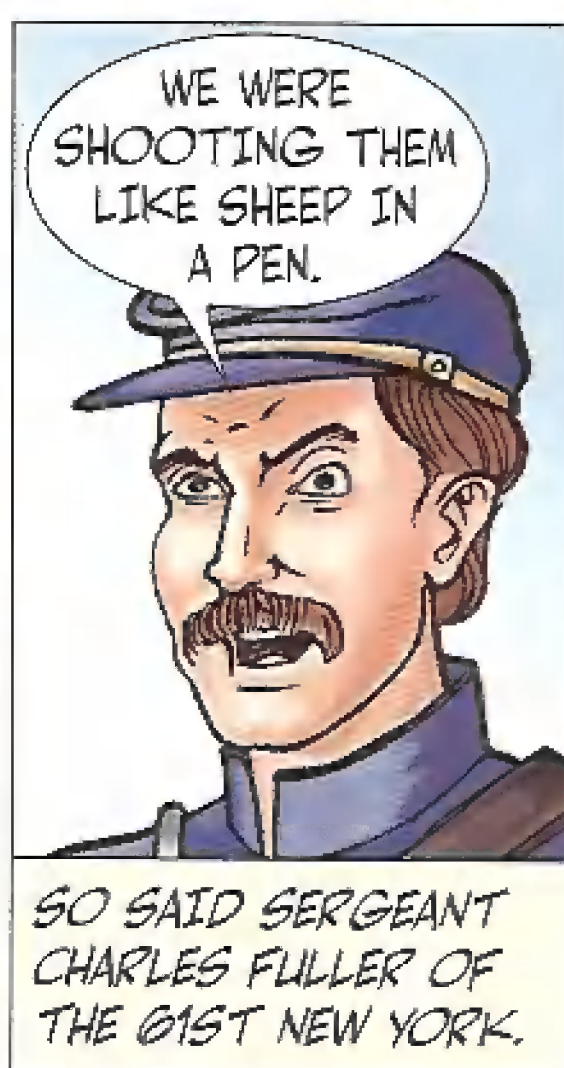


MEN WERE SHOOTING AT EACH OTHER AT
SUCH CLOSE RANGE THAT THEY WERE
NOT MISSING MANY SHOTS.



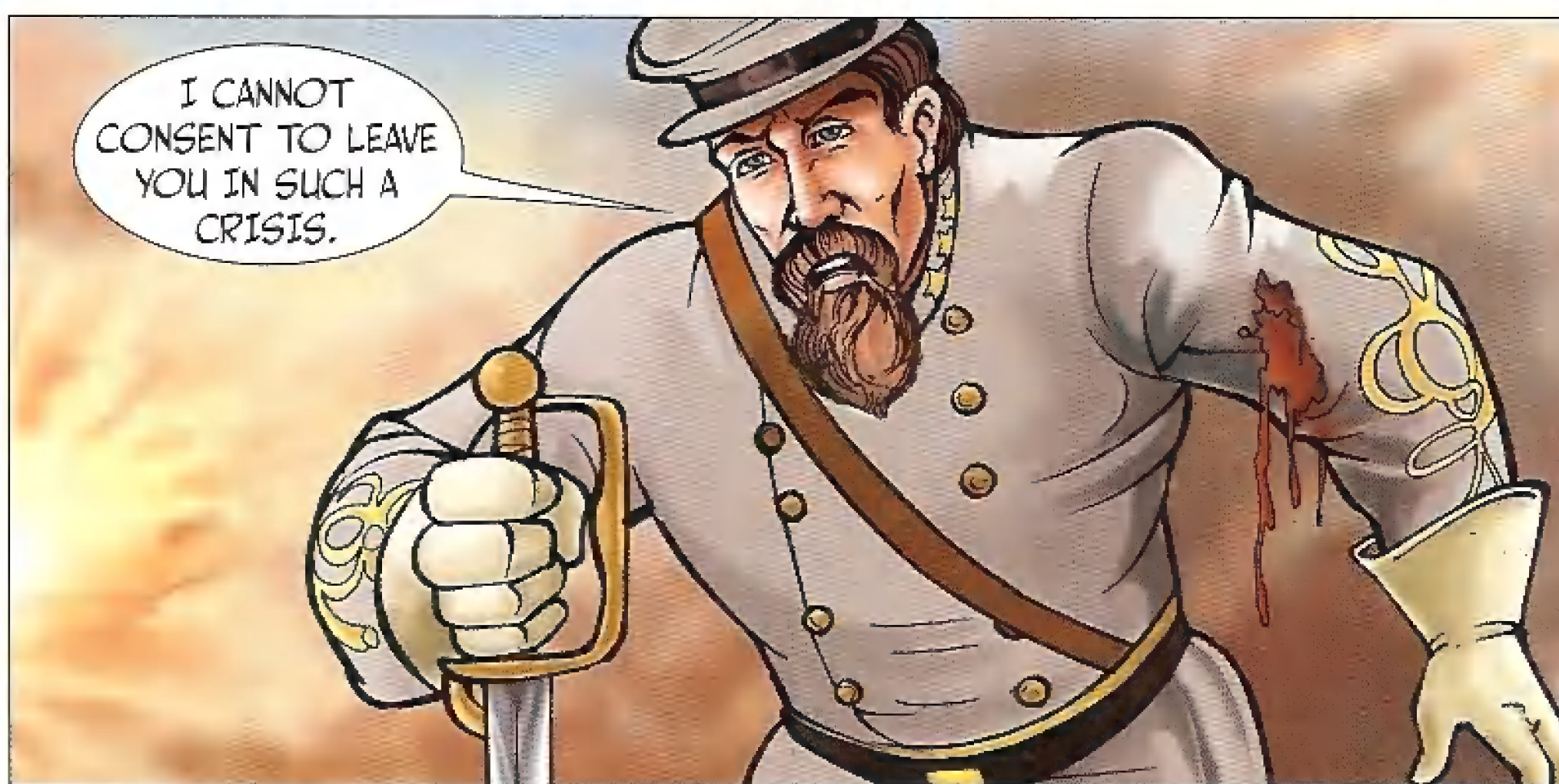
GORDON WAS SHOT
AGAIN, IN THE SAME LEG.

COLONEL BARLOW HAD MOVED HIS REGIMENTS TO A POSITION WHERE THEY COULD FIRE DOWN THE LENGTH OF THE CONFEDERATE LINE.



COLONEL GORDON WAS SHOT A THIRD TIME, THROUGH HIS LEFT ARM.





...BUT WAS HIT IN THE FACE. THE BULLET PASSED THROUGH, BARELY MISSING AN IMPORTANT VEIN.



HE FELL UNCONSCIOUS WITH HIS FACE IN HIS CAP.

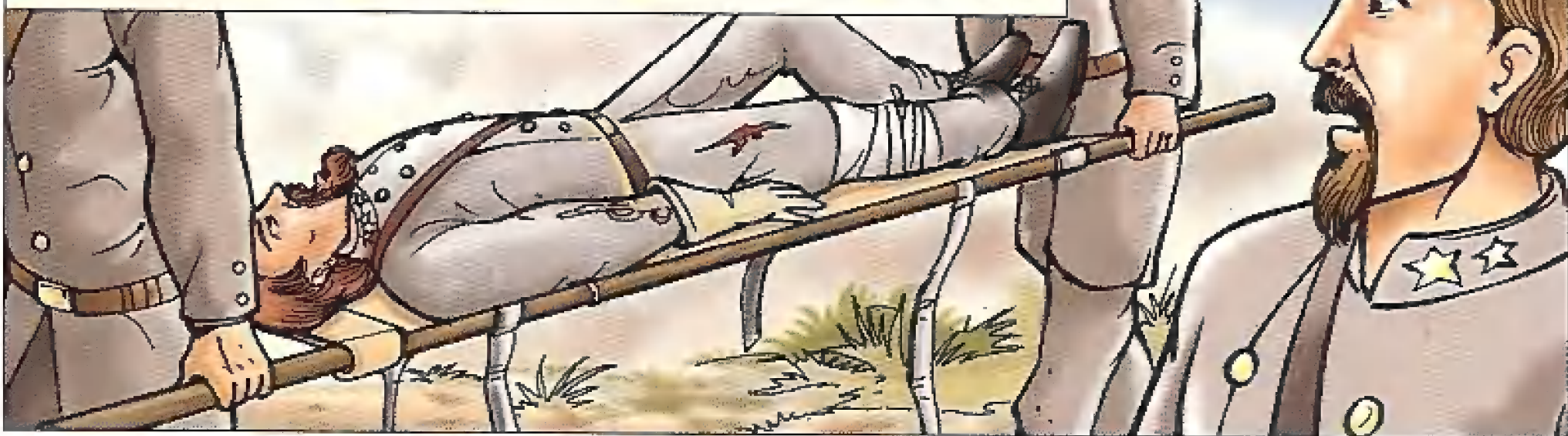


GORDON WOULD HAVE DROWNED IN HIS OWN BLOOD HAD IT NOT DRAINED OUT OF HIS CAP THROUGH A HOLE MADE PREVIOUSLY BY A NORTH-ERNER'S BULLET.*

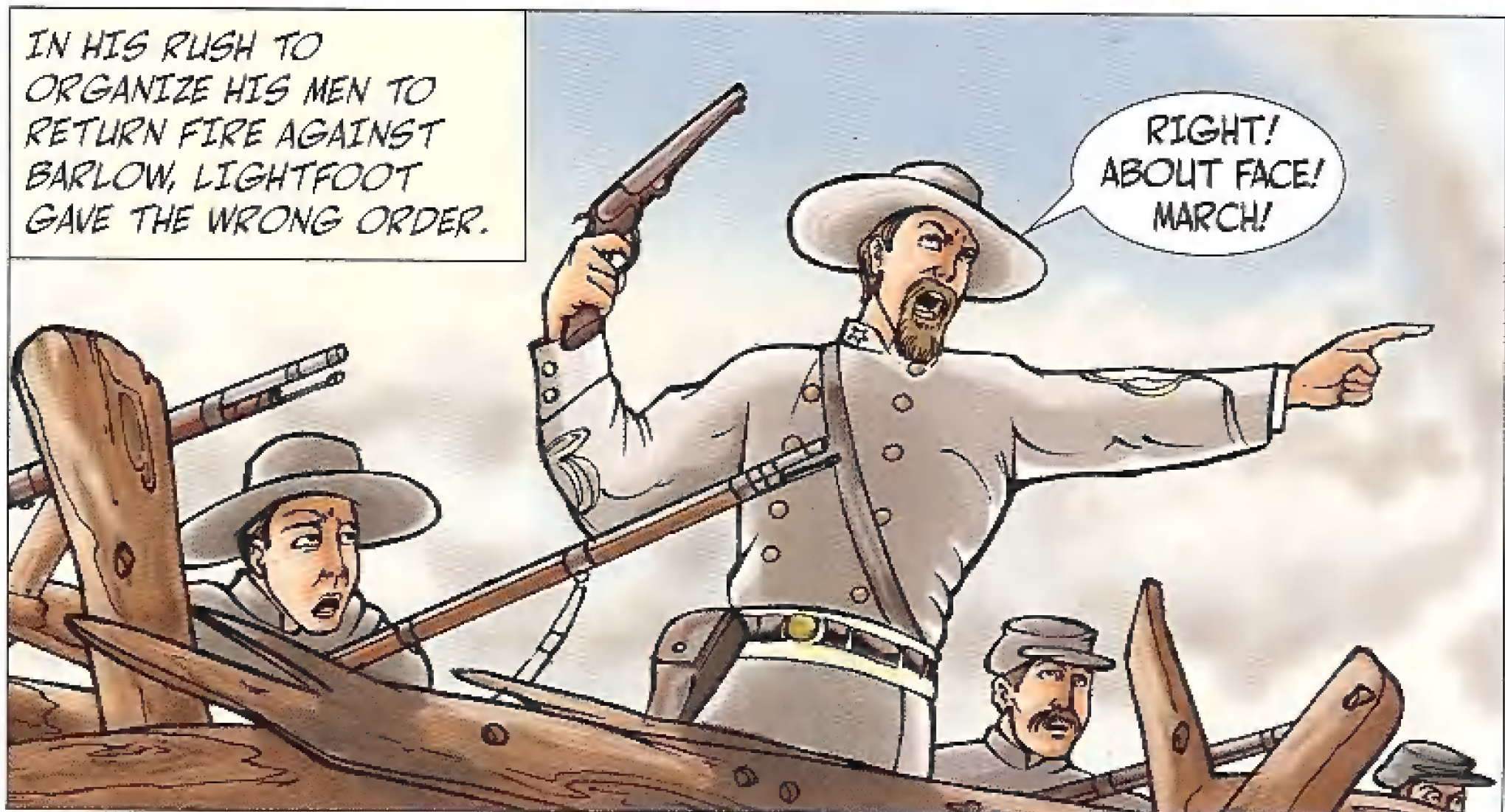


*AMAZINGLY, GORDON WOULD SURVIVE HIS WOUNDS AND THE WAR.

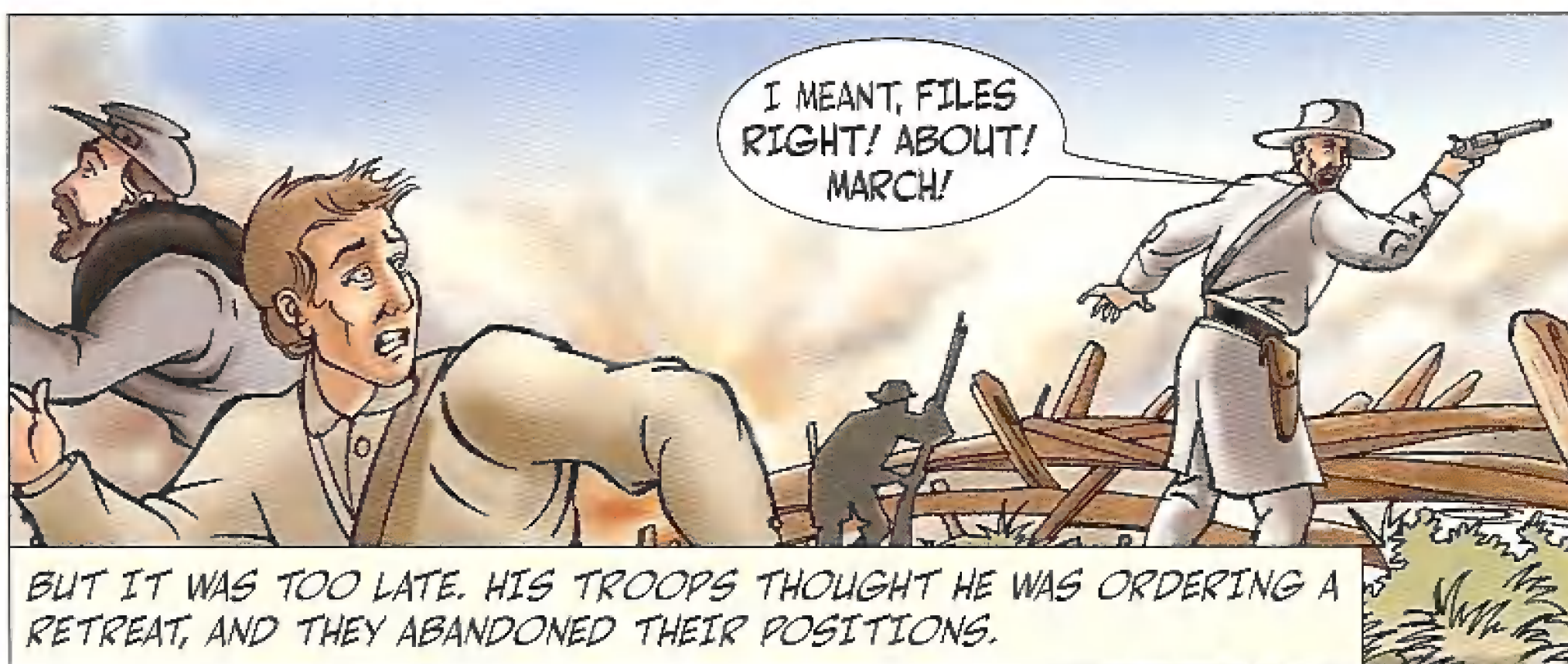
COLONEL GORDON WAS TAKEN FROM THE FIELD. LIEUTENANT COLONEL LIGHTFOOT TOOK COMMAND.



IN HIS RUSH TO ORGANIZE HIS MEN TO RETURN FIRE AGAINST BARLOW, LIGHTFOOT GAVE THE WRONG ORDER.



RIGHT!
ABOUT FACE!
MARCH!



BARLOW'S MEN STOOD UPON THE DEAD AND DYING, THREE DEEP IN THE BOTTOM OF THE ROAD, AS THEY SHOT AT THE RETREATING CONFEDERATES.



FROM THEN ON, THE SUNKEN ROAD WAS KNOWN AS "BLOODY LANE."

UNION LOSSES AT THE SUNKEN ROAD WERE ABOUT 3,000. THE CONFEDERATES LOST 2,600 MEN THERE . . .

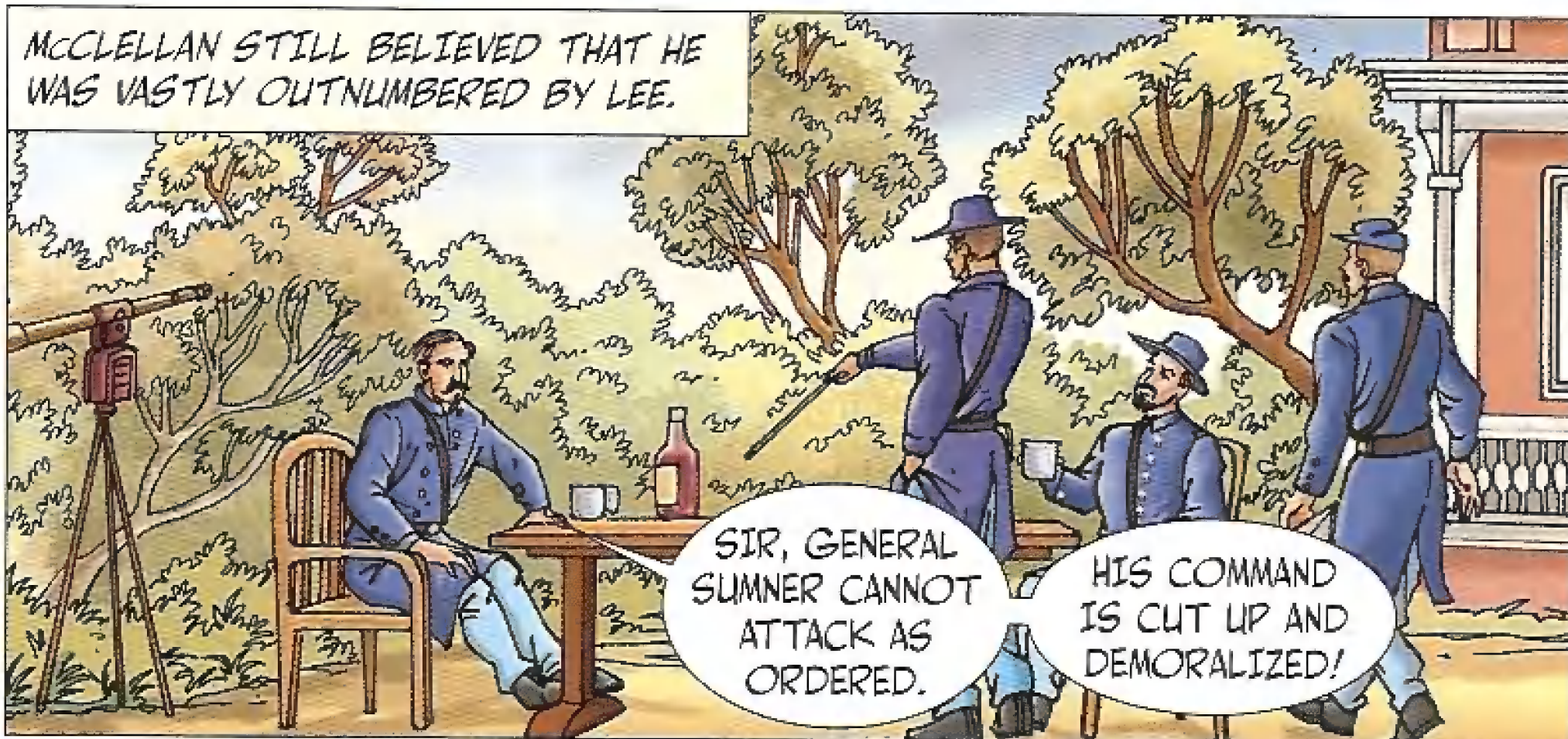


THE FEDERALS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD REGIMENTS TO SPARE.



TWENTY THOUSAND FRESH TROOPS WERE WAITING FOR ORDERS THAT NEVER CAME.

MCCLELLAN STILL BELIEVED THAT HE WAS VASTLY OUTNUMBERED BY LEE.



SIR, GENERALS FRANKLIN AND HANCOCK ARE STANDING BY TO ATTACK! THEY SAY THEY CAN BEAT THE CONFEDERATES DECISIVELY!

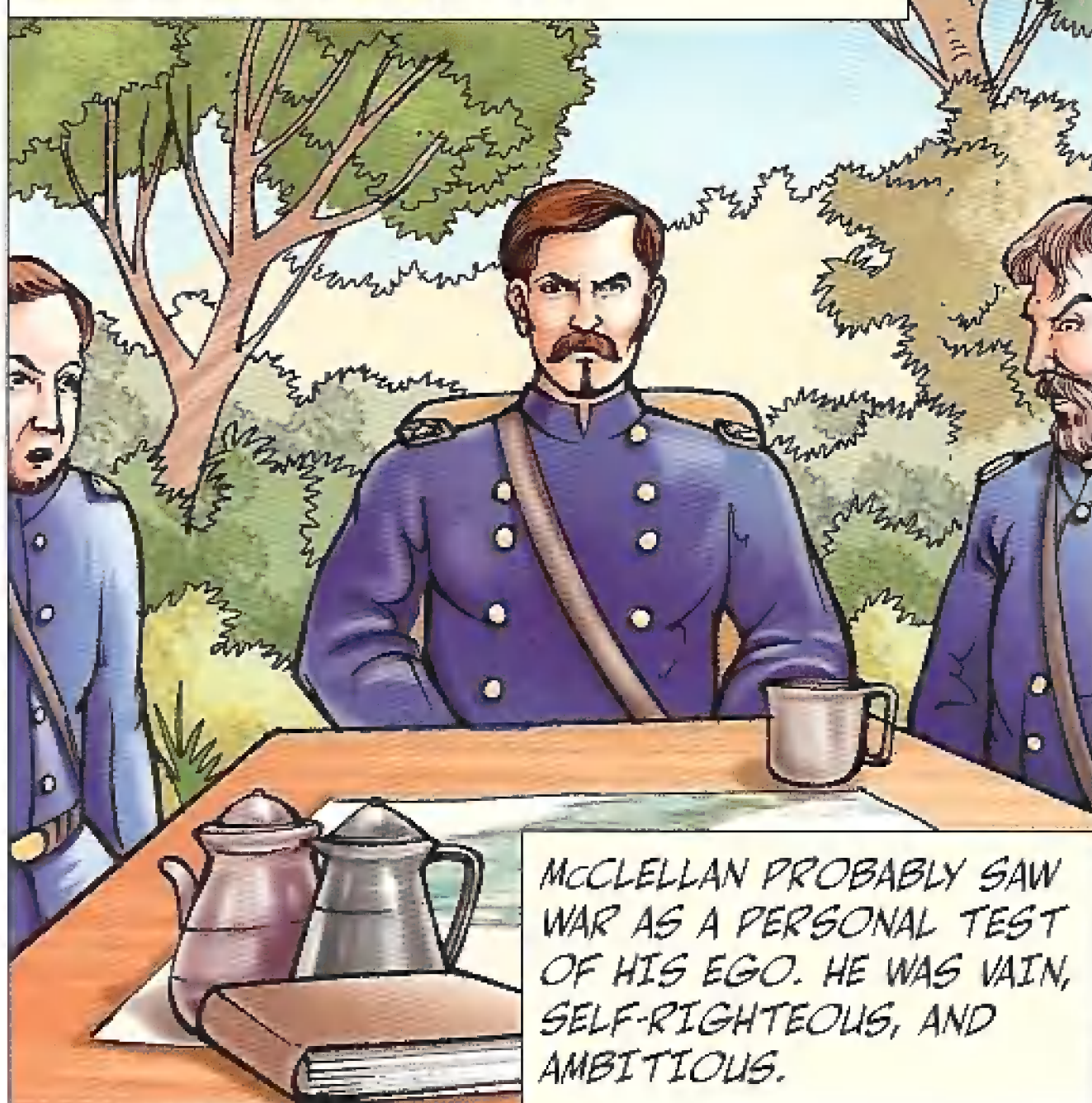


IF THE ATTACK FAILS, THE DAY WILL BE LOST.



THE ATTACK WAS NOT ORDERED. ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO END THE WAR WAS LOST.

MCCLELLAN'S FAILURE TO ACT DECISIVELY SHOWED THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS VIEW OF WAR AND LEE'S.



MCCLELLAN PROBABLY SAW WAR AS A PERSONAL TEST OF HIS EGO. HE WAS VAIN, SELF-RIGHTEOUS, AND AMBITIOUS.

HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT OF HIS ARMY AS HE THOUGHT OF HIS HORSE. HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE IT HURT OR TREATED BADLY.



A LOST BATTLE HURT HIM DEEPLY AND PERSONALLY.

LEE BELIEVED THAT WAR WAS A DIVINE ACT.



... AND THAT THE SOUTH WOULD WIN BECAUSE IT HAD RIGHT ON ITS SIDE.

THIS ALLOWED LEE TO ACCEPT TERRIBLE CASUALTIES AND TAKE RISKS . . .



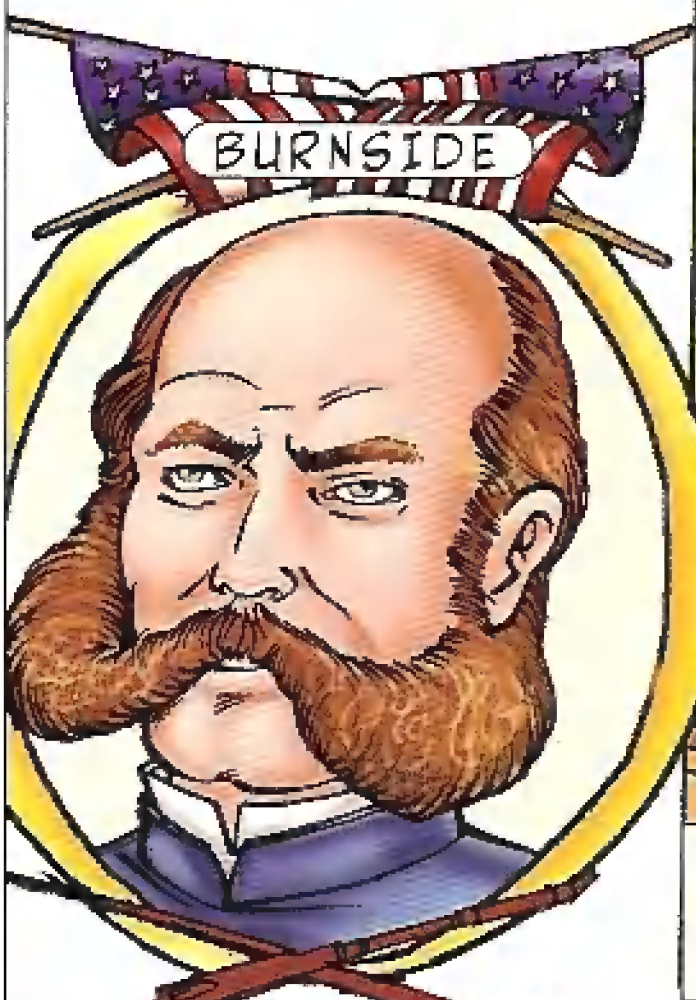
... WHILE MCCLELLAN COULD NOT.

IF THERE WERE THREE DISTINCT PHASES TO THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM, THE CORNFIELD WAS THE FIRST, THE BLOODY LANE WAS THE SECOND . . .



. . . AND THE EVENTS AT A LITTLE STONE BRIDGE OVER THE ANTIETAM CREEK, ON THE FAR RIGHT OF LEE'S LINE, WERE TO BECOME THE THIRD.

MCCLELLAN ORDERED UNION GENERAL AMBROSE BURNSIDE TO TAKE THE BRIDGE AT 8:00 A.M.



BURNSIDE HAD MORE THAN 12,500 TROOPS AT HIS DISPOSAL.



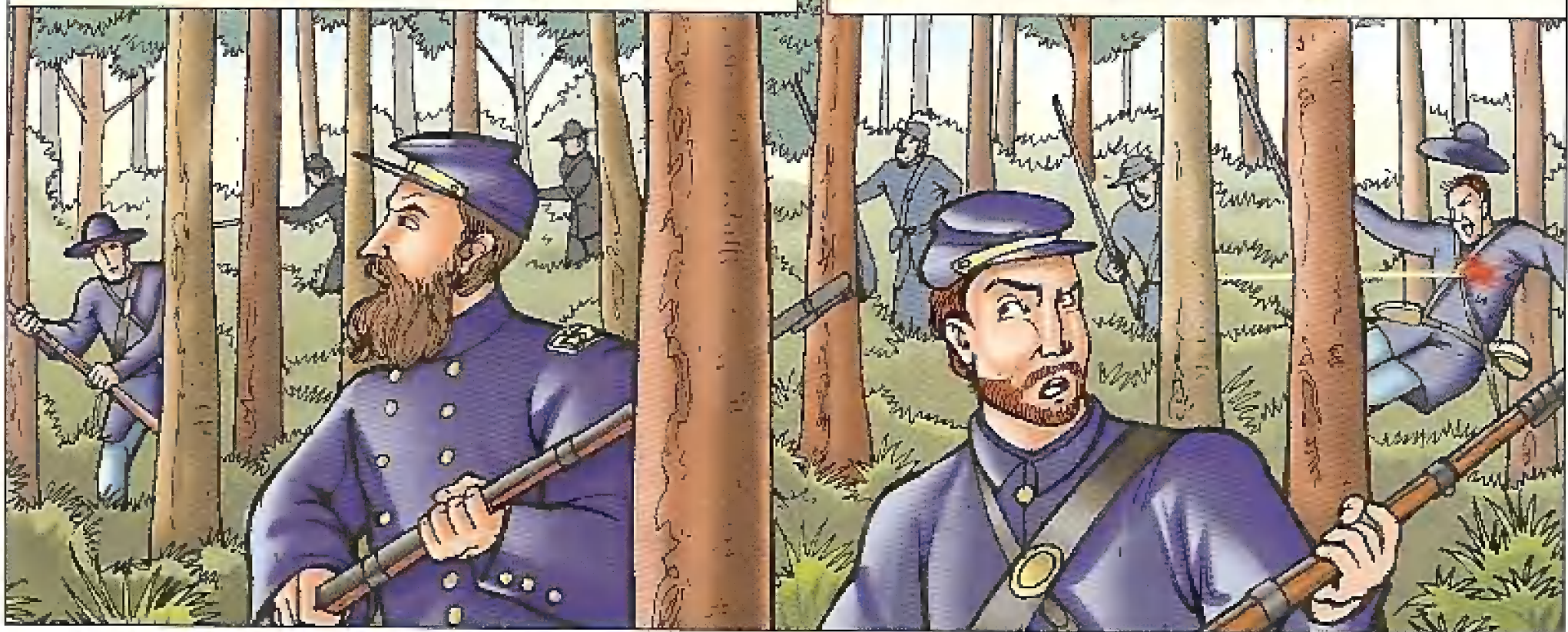
CONFEDERATE GENERAL ROBERT TOOMBS WAS HOLDING THE BRIDGE WITH ONLY 400 MEN . . .



. . . BUT THEY WERE DUG INTO HIDDEN PITS AND SNIPING FROM THE TREES.

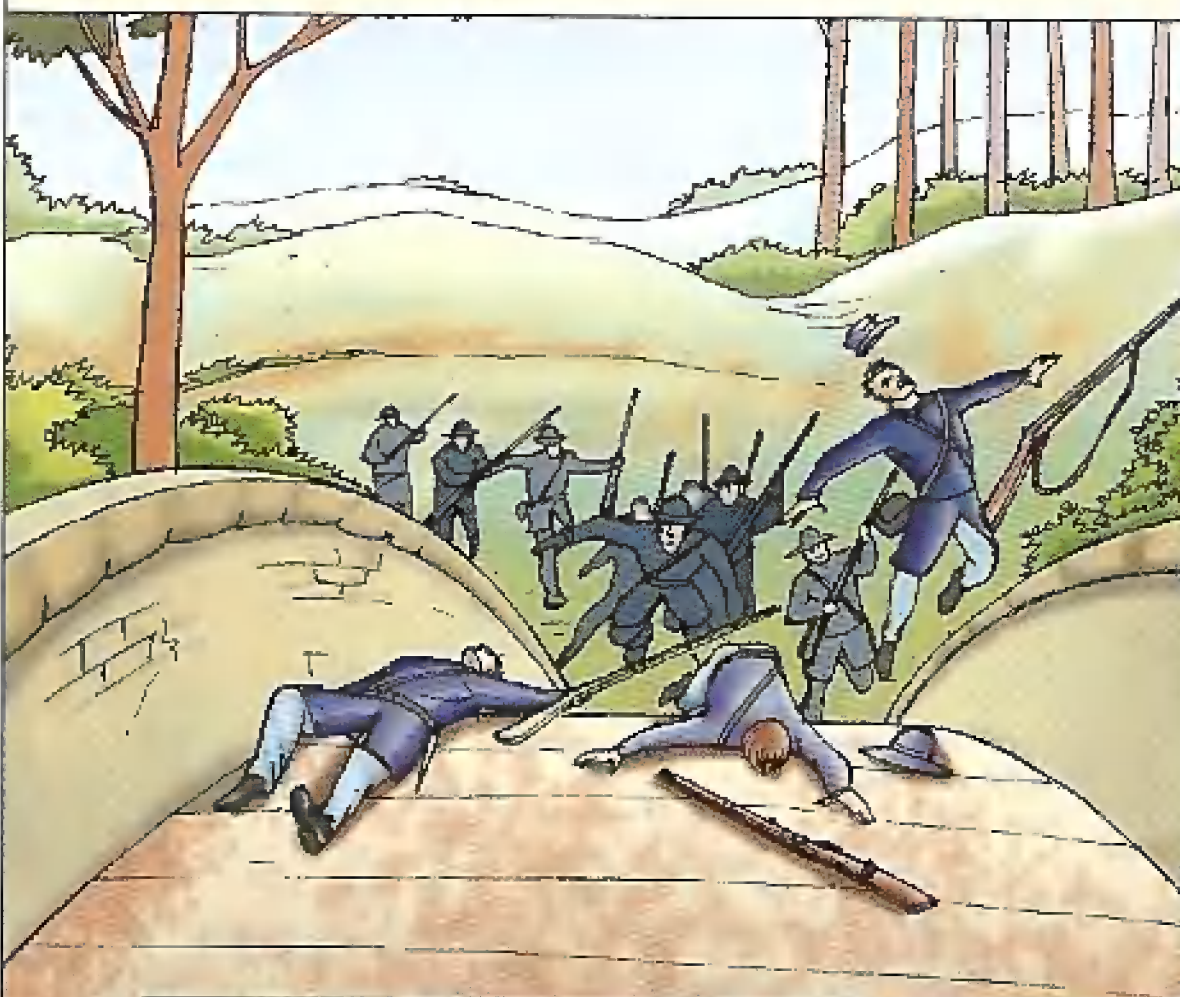
UNION COLONEL GEORGE CROOK LED THREE REGIMENTS OF OHIO VOLUNTEERS AGAINST THE BRIDGE . . .

. . . OR HE WOULD HAVE, HAD THEY NOT GOTTEN LOST. DOZENS WERE SHOT THROUGH THE TREES.

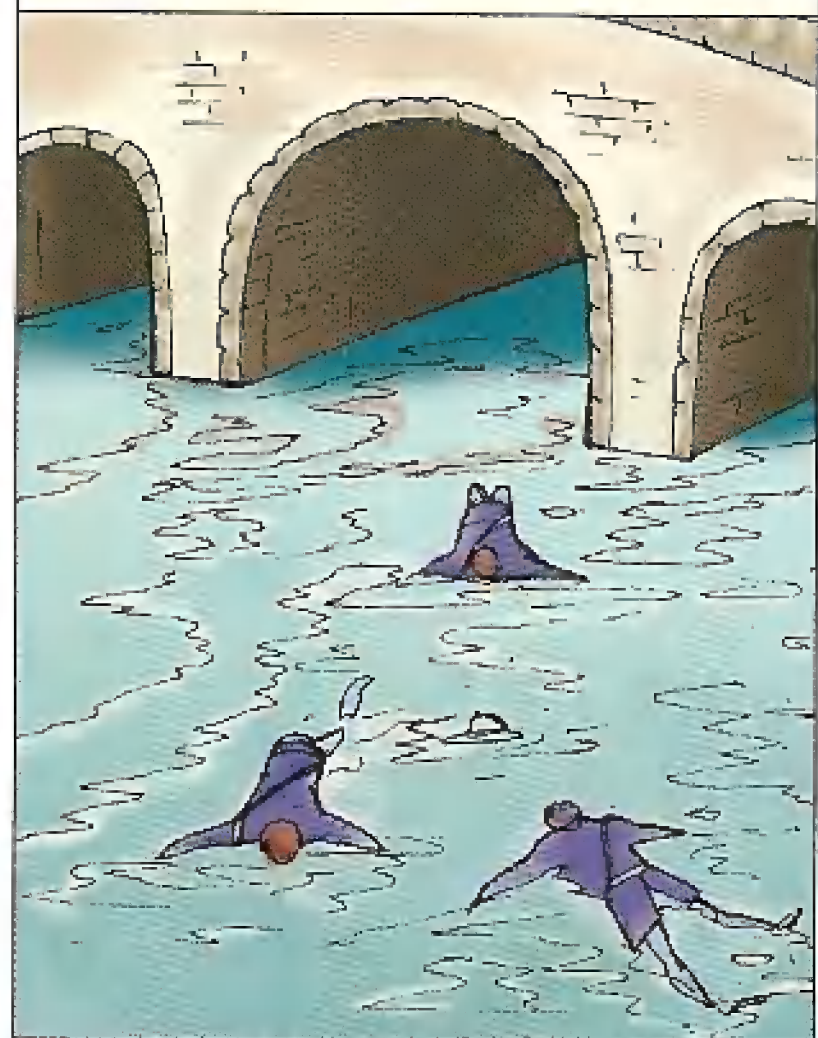


UNION GENERAL S. D. STURGIS, COMMANDING THE 2ND MARYLAND AND THE 6TH HAMPSHIRE, MADE THE SECOND ASSAULT.

. . . BUT THE KNOWLEDGE DID HIM LITTLE GOOD IN LIGHT OF CONFEDERATE SHARPSHOOTERS AND ARTILLERY.



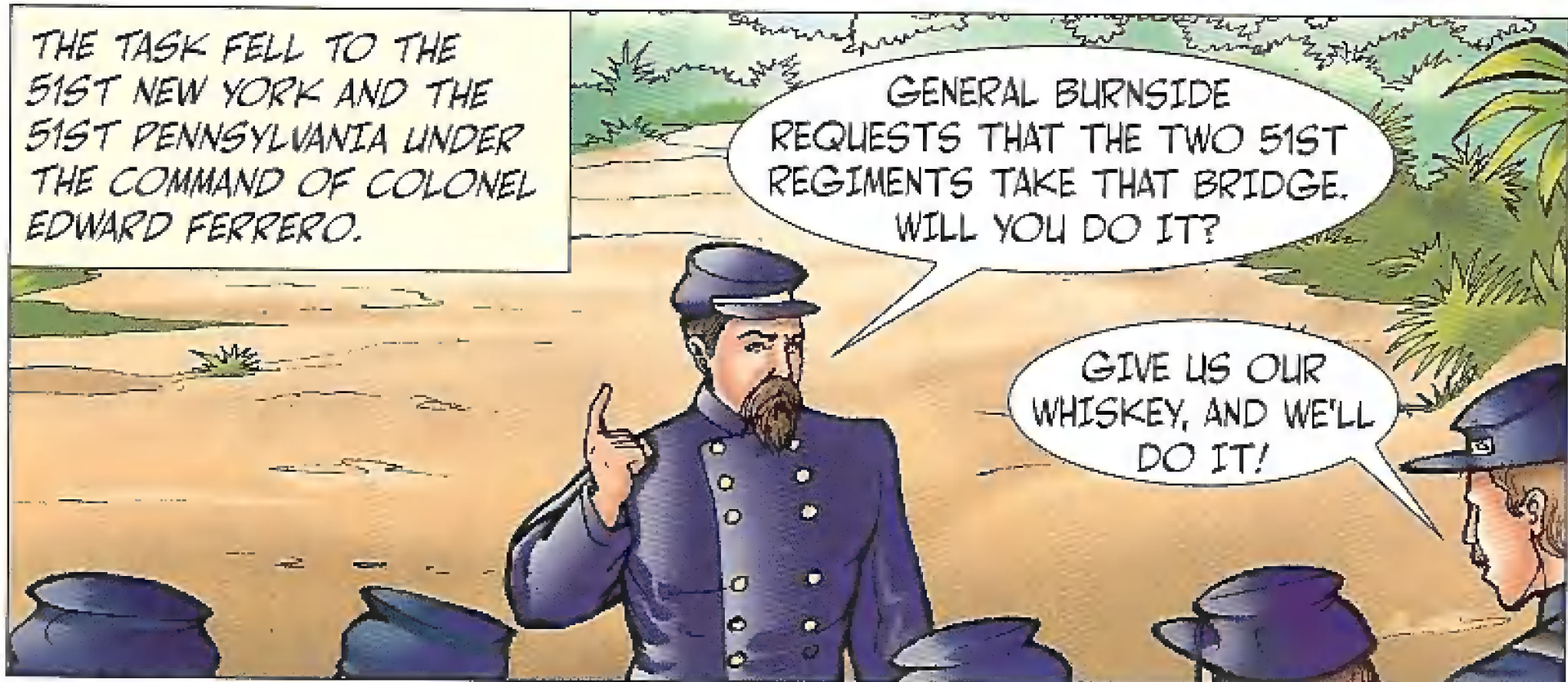
AT LEAST HE HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWING WHERE THE BRIDGE WAS . . .



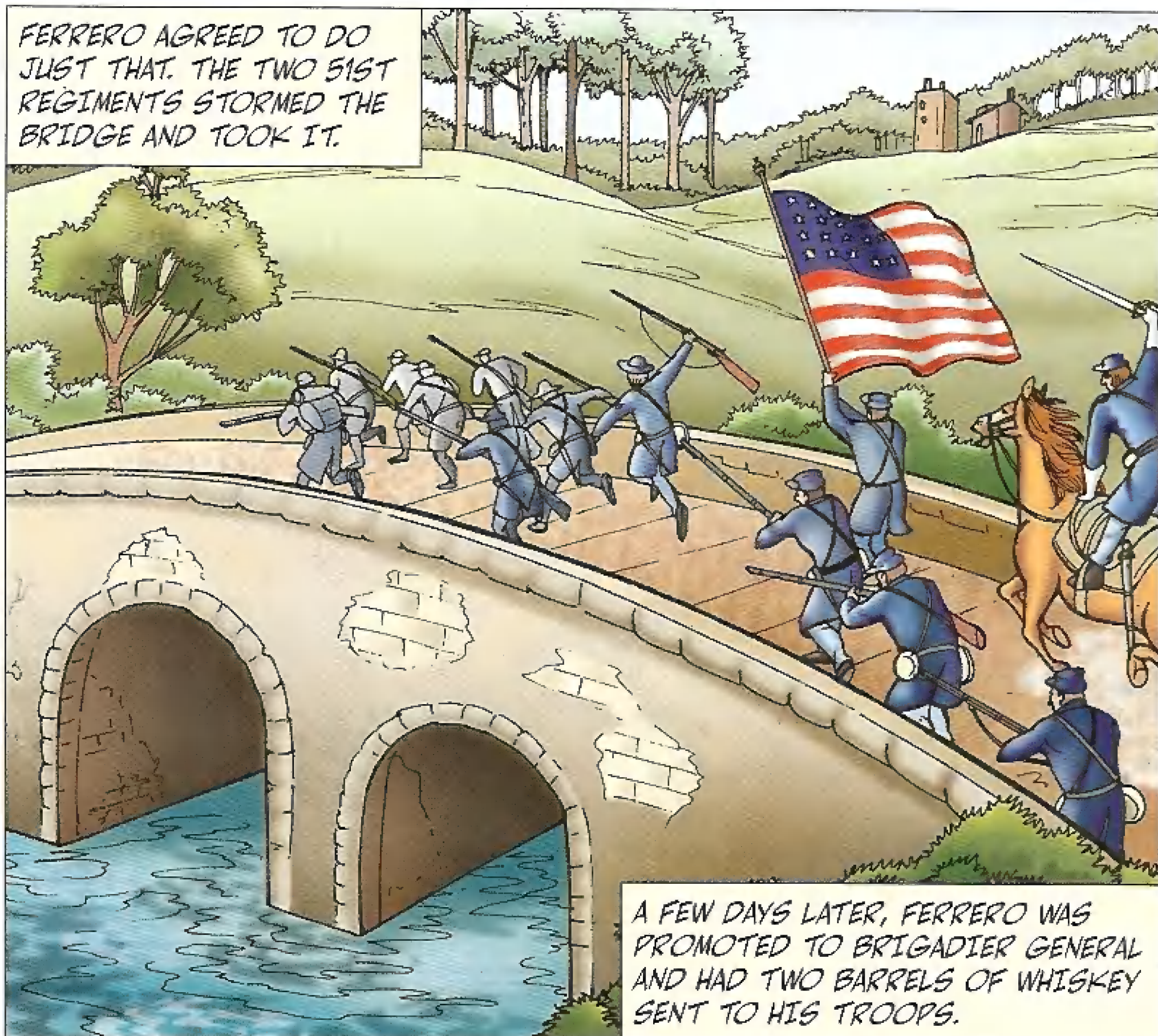
THE TASK FELL TO THE 51ST NEW YORK AND THE 51ST PENNSYLVANIA UNDER THE COMMAND OF COLONEL EDWARD FERRERO.

GENERAL BURNSIDE REQUESTS THAT THE TWO 51ST REGIMENTS TAKE THAT BRIDGE. WILL YOU DO IT?

GIVE US OUR WHISKEY, AND WE'LL DO IT!



FERRERO AGREED TO DO JUST THAT. THE TWO 51ST REGIMENTS STORMED THE BRIDGE AND TOOK IT.



A FEW DAYS LATER, FERRERO WAS PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER GENERAL AND HAD TWO BARRELS OF WHISKEY SENT TO HIS TROOPS.

TOOMBS AND HIS GEORGIA MEN FELL BACK TOWARD SHARPSBURG. THEY WERE OUT OF AMMUNITION.



THEY HAD INFLICTED MORE THAN 500 CASUALTIES WHILE LOSING 160 OF THEIR OWN.

EARLY AFTERNOON AT
MCLELLAN'S
HEADQUARTERS . . .

SIR, GENERAL
BURNSIDE REPORTS THAT
HE HAS 8,000 MEN ACROSS
THE BRIDGE.

WHAT IS HE
WAITING FOR? WHY
ISN'T HE ATTACKING
SHARPSBURG?



THE WAY INTO SHARPSBURG WAS
STILL BEING HOTLY DEFENDED BY
CONFEDERATE SHARPSHOOTERS
AND CRACK ARTILLERY UNITS.



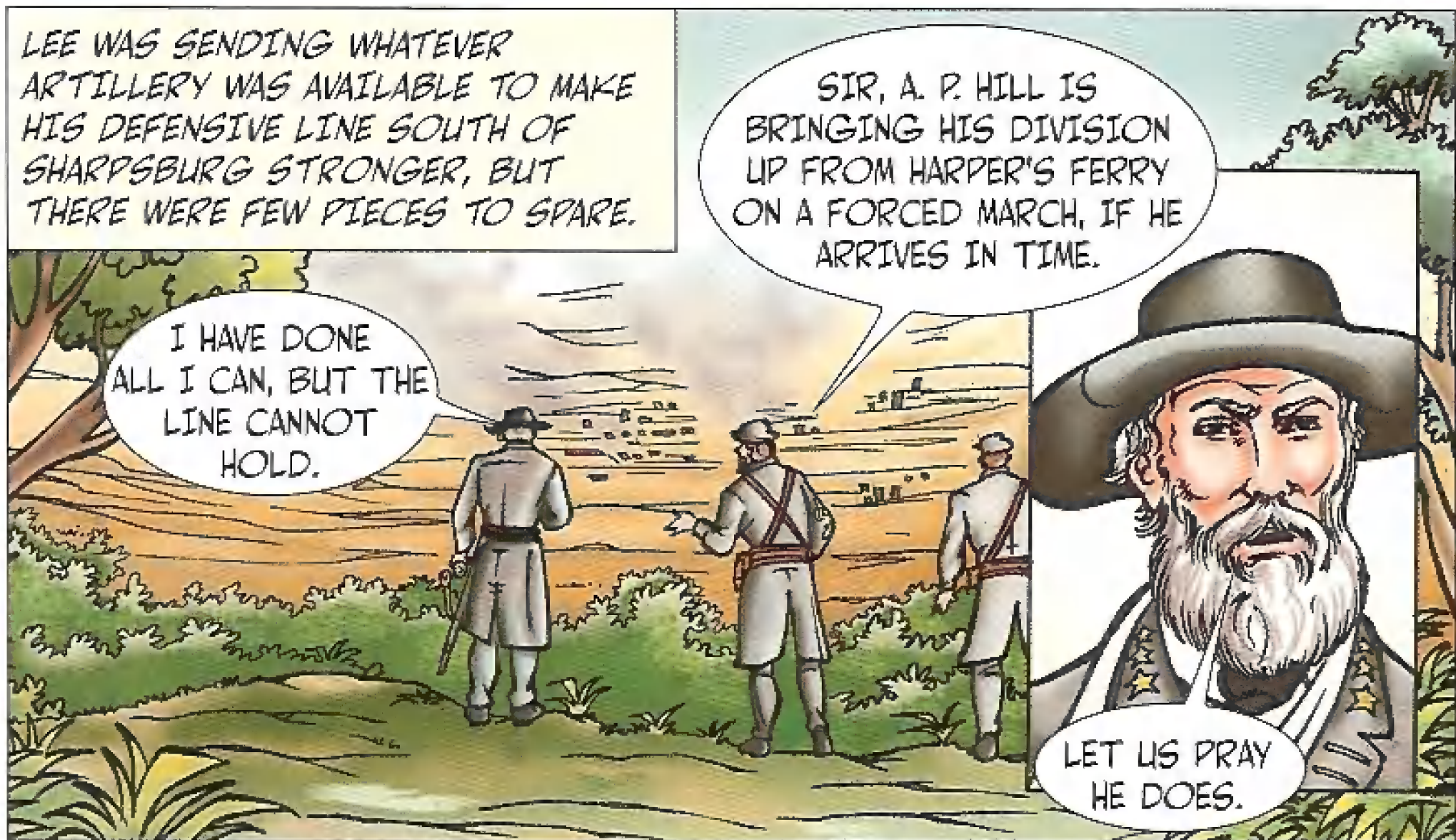
BURNSIDE WAS HAVING A HARD
TIME INVADING THE TOWN.

LEE WAS SENDING WHATEVER
ARTILLERY WAS AVAILABLE TO MAKE
HIS DEFENSIVE LINE SOUTH OF
SHARPSBURG STRONGER, BUT
THERE WERE FEW PIECES TO SPARE.

SIR, A. P. HILL IS
BRINGING HIS DIVISION
UP FROM HARPER'S FERRY
ON A FORCED MARCH, IF HE
ARRIVES IN TIME.

I HAVE DONE
ALL I CAN, BUT THE
LINE CANNOT
HOLD.

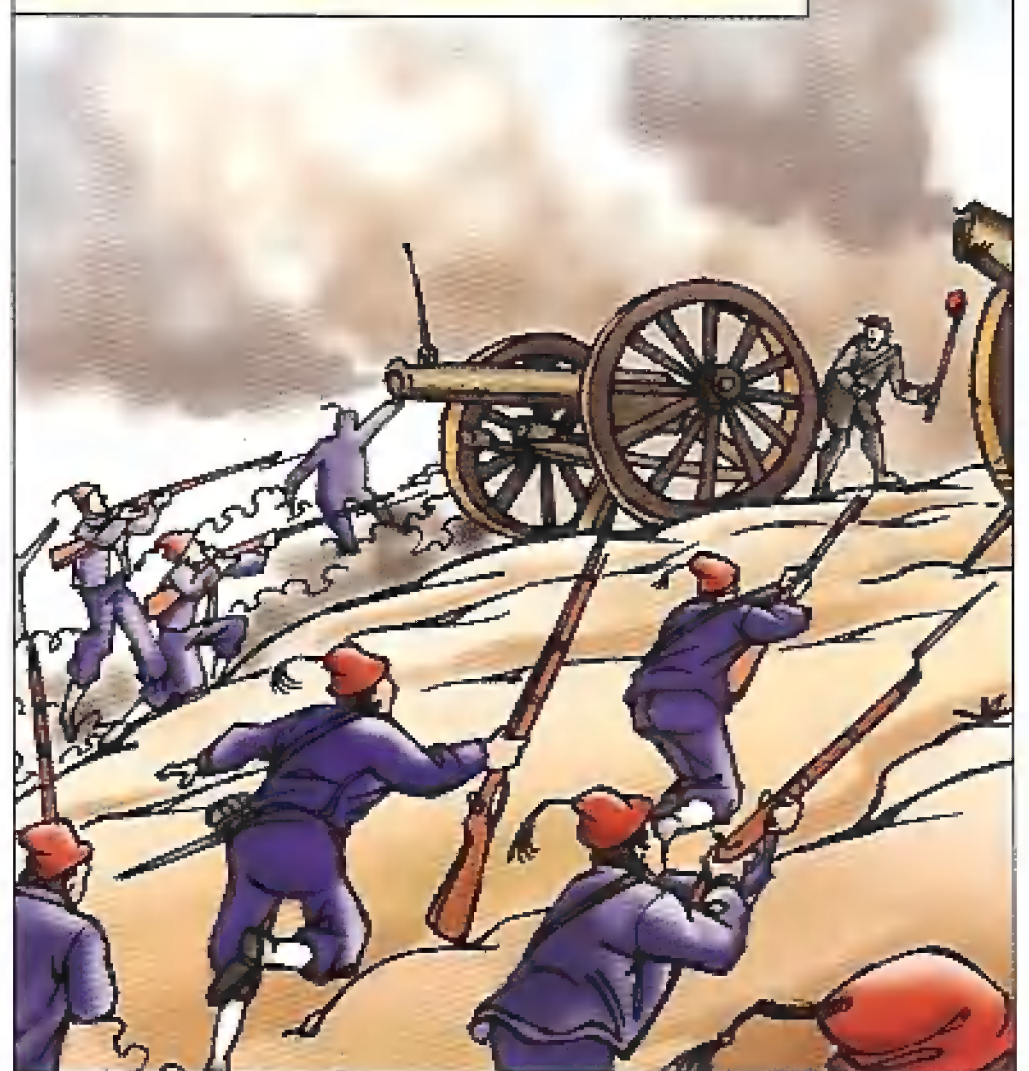
LET US PRAY
HE DOES.



SOUTH OF SHARPSBURG, THE 9TH NEW YORK ZOUAVES* ADVANCED ON A STRONG CONFEDERATE POSITION BEHIND A STONE WALL ATOP A LOW RIDGE.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL EDGAR KIMBALL LED THE CHARGE. THE CONFEDERATE GUNNERS FLED.



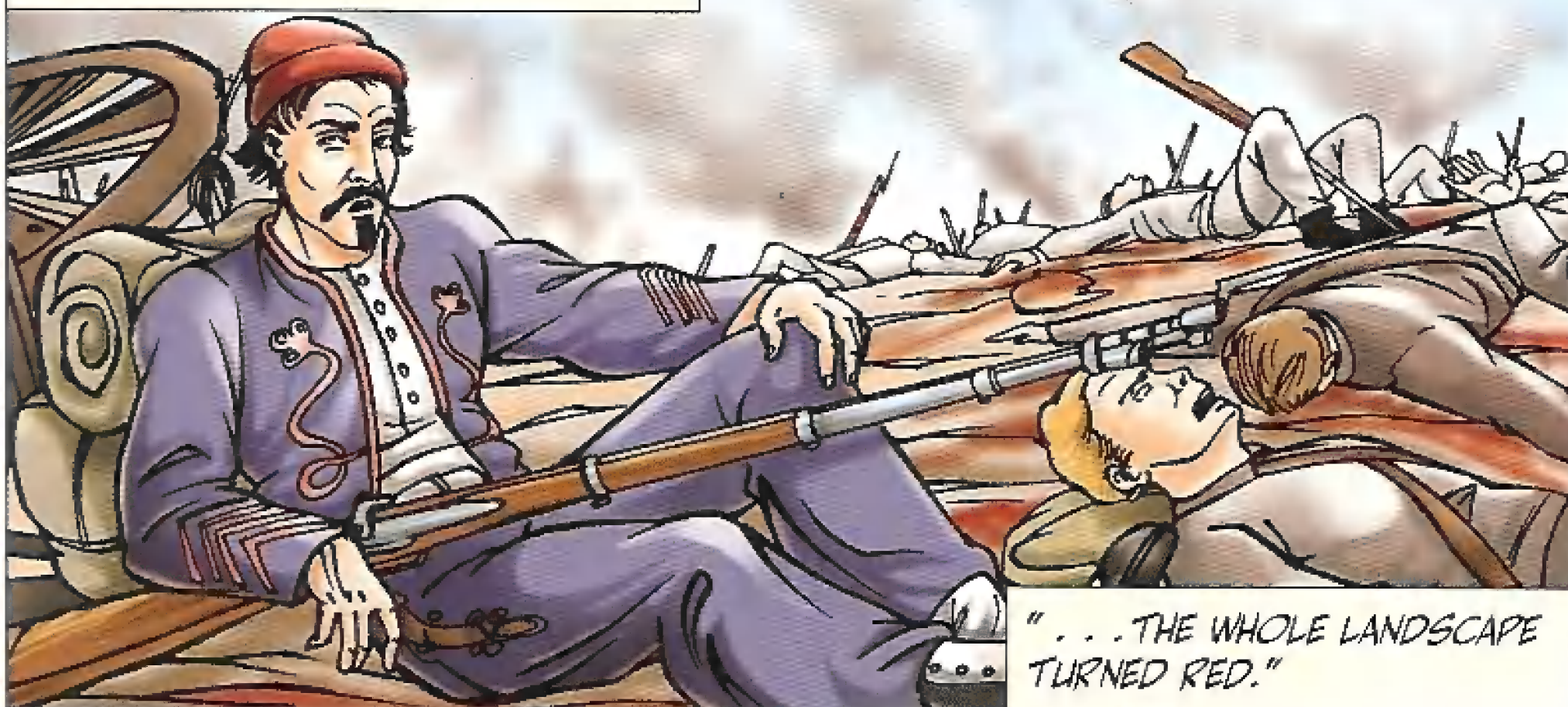
THE CONFEDERATES BEHIND THE WALL WERE MADE OF STERNER STUFF...



... BUT THEY BROKE AND RAN AS WELL.



ONE ZOUAVE LATER DESCRIBED HIS EXPERIENCE VERY VIVIDLY ...

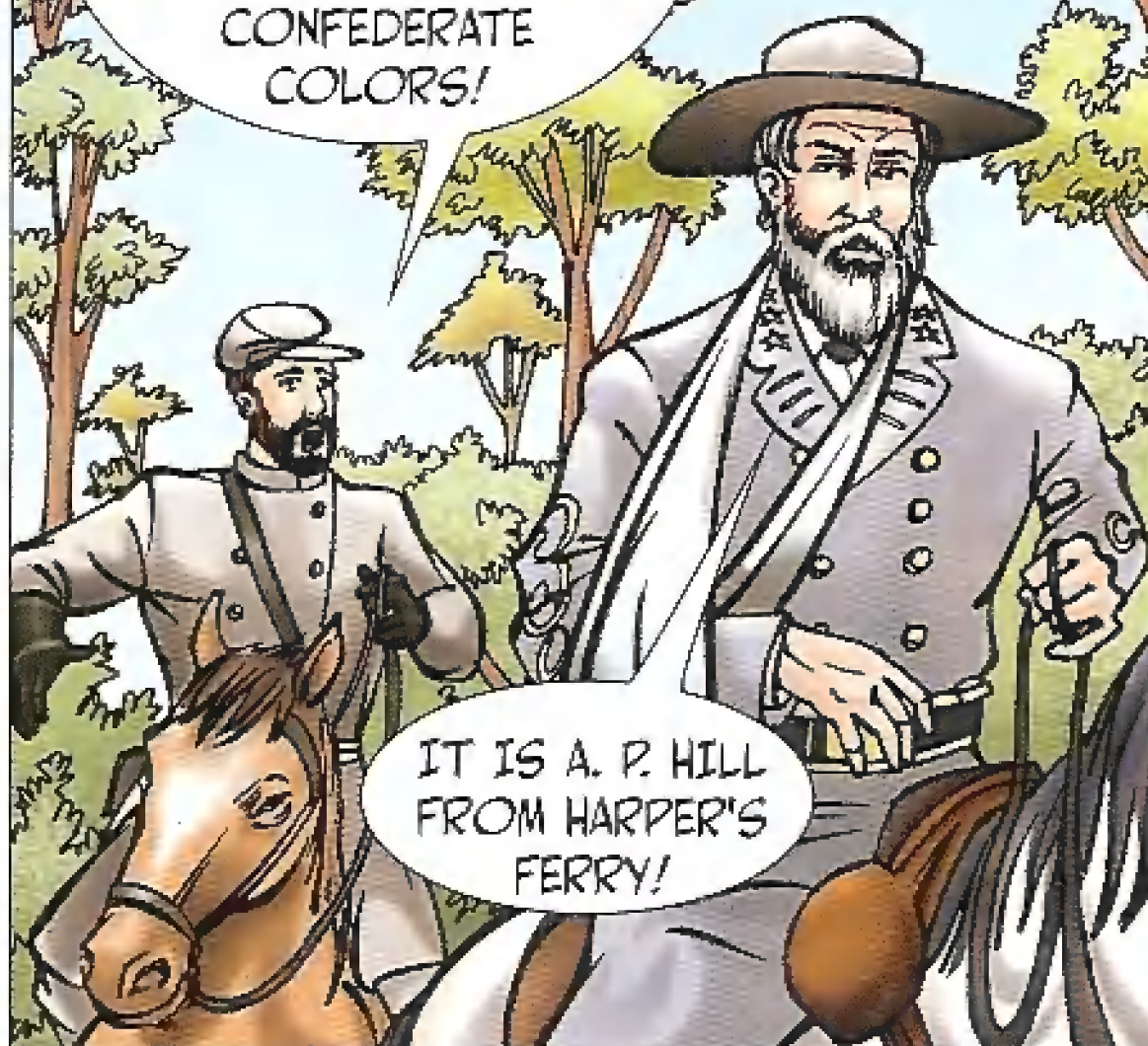


"... THE WHOLE LANDSCAPE TURNED RED."

OF THE 600 MEN OF THE 9TH NEW YORK WHO MADE THAT CHARGE, 220 FELL.

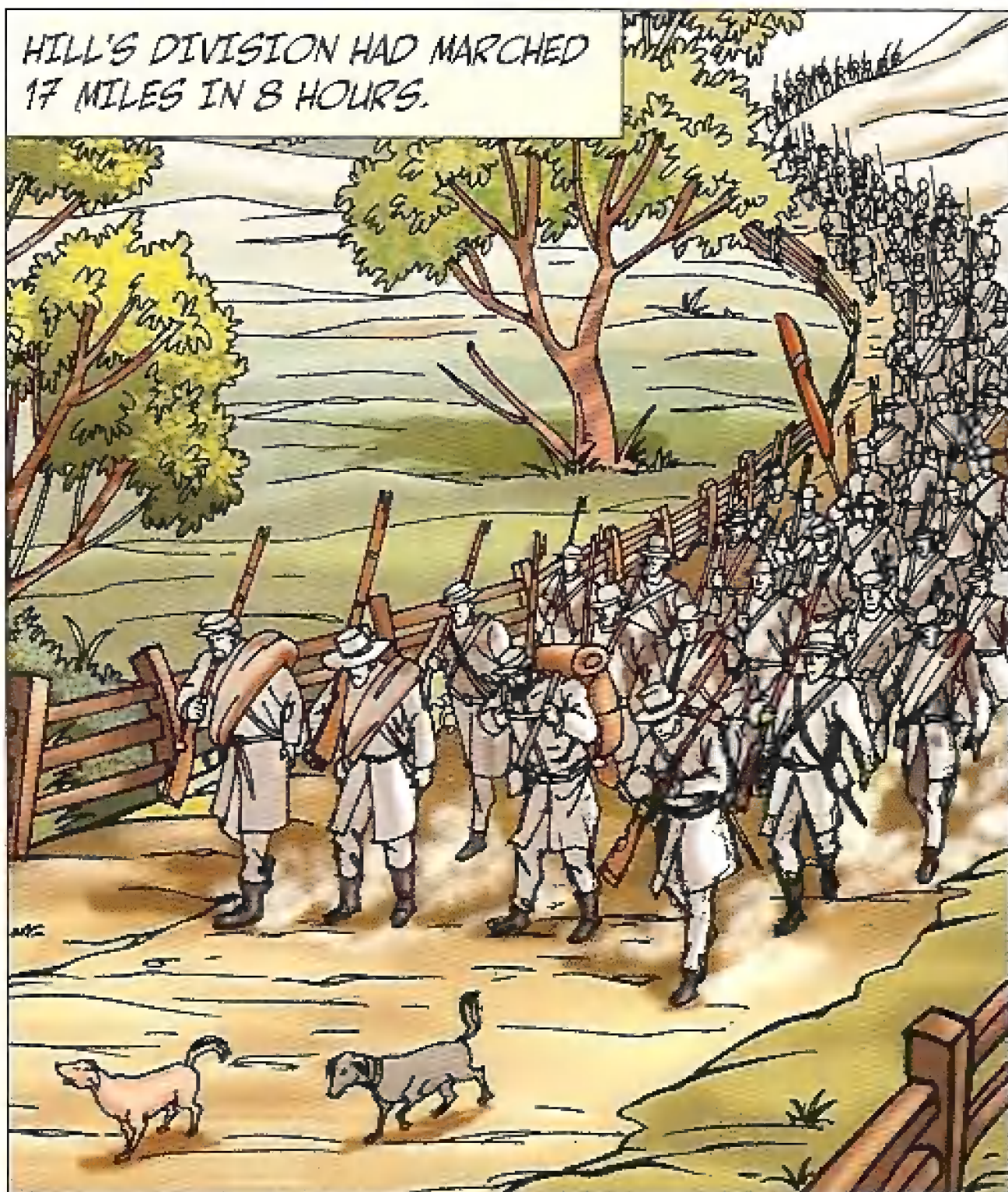


GENERAL LEE!
THERE IS A COLUMN
APPROACHING FROM THE
SOUTHEAST. THEY ARE
FLYING THE VIRGINIA AND
CONFEDERATE
COLORS!



IT IS A. P. HILL
FROM HARPER'S
FERRY!

HILL'S DIVISION HAD MARCHED
17 MILES IN 8 HOURS.



MAJOR GENERAL AMBROSE
POWELL HILL HAD OFTEN
BEEN BITTERLY AT ODDS
WITH HIS SUPERIORS...



... BUT LEE HUGGED
HILL WARMLY WHEN HE
ARRIVED.

HILL'S DIVISION IMMEDIATELY
ASSAULTED THE LEFT FLANK OF
THE UNION LINE THAT WAS
ATTACKING TOWARD
SHARPSBURG.



THE UNIT ON THE EXTREME UNION
LEFT THAT HILL ENGAGED WAS
THE 16TH CONNECTICUT.



THE 16TH CONNECTICUT WAS BRAND NEW. THEY HAD ONLY BEEN ISSUED THEIR RIFLES TEN DAYS BEFORE.



THEY HAD RECEIVED NO WEAPONS TRAINING AT ALL.



MANY DIED WITH THEIR RIFLES UNFIRED.

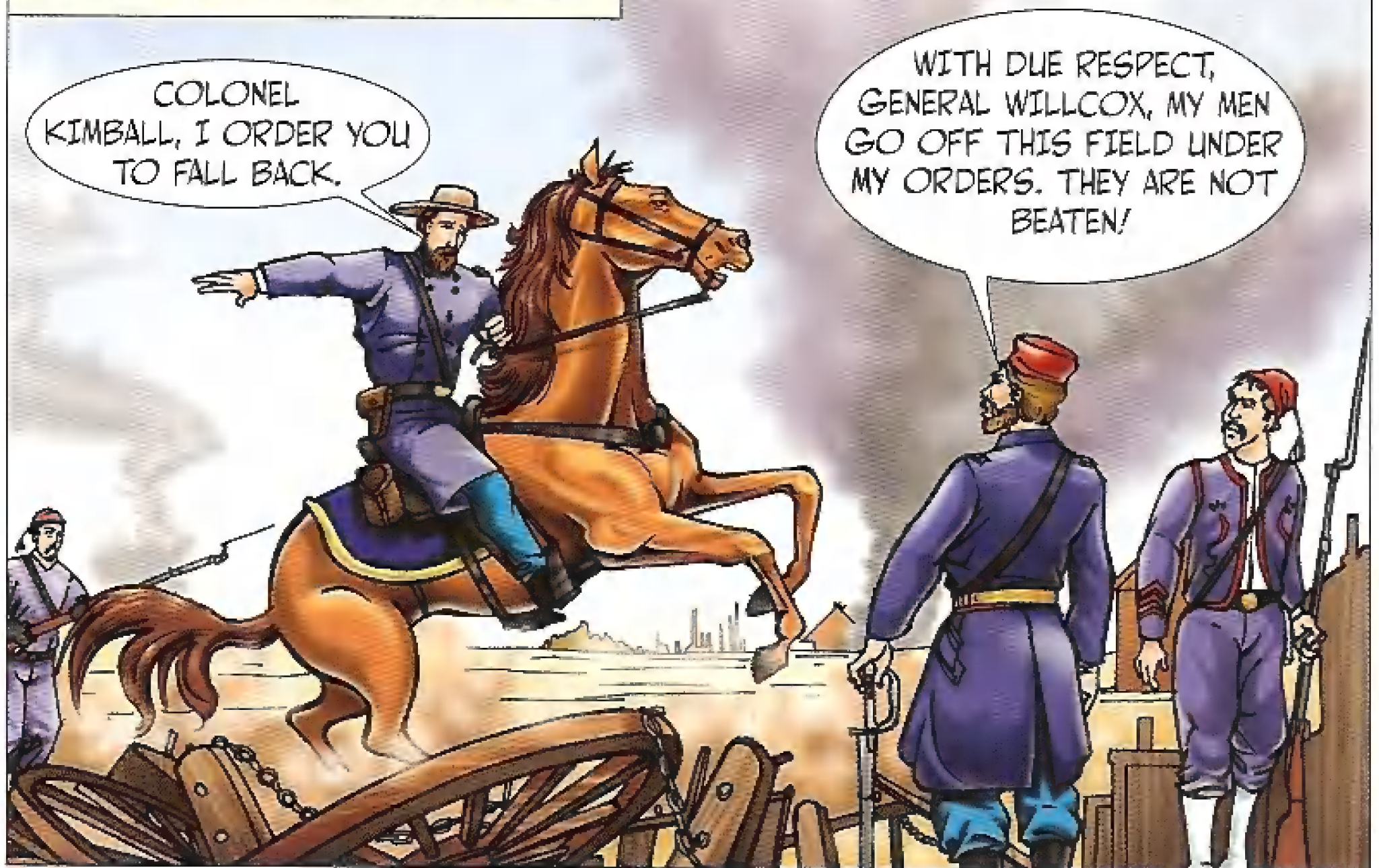


THE SURVIVORS BROKE AND RAN. FEW WOULD BLAME THEM.

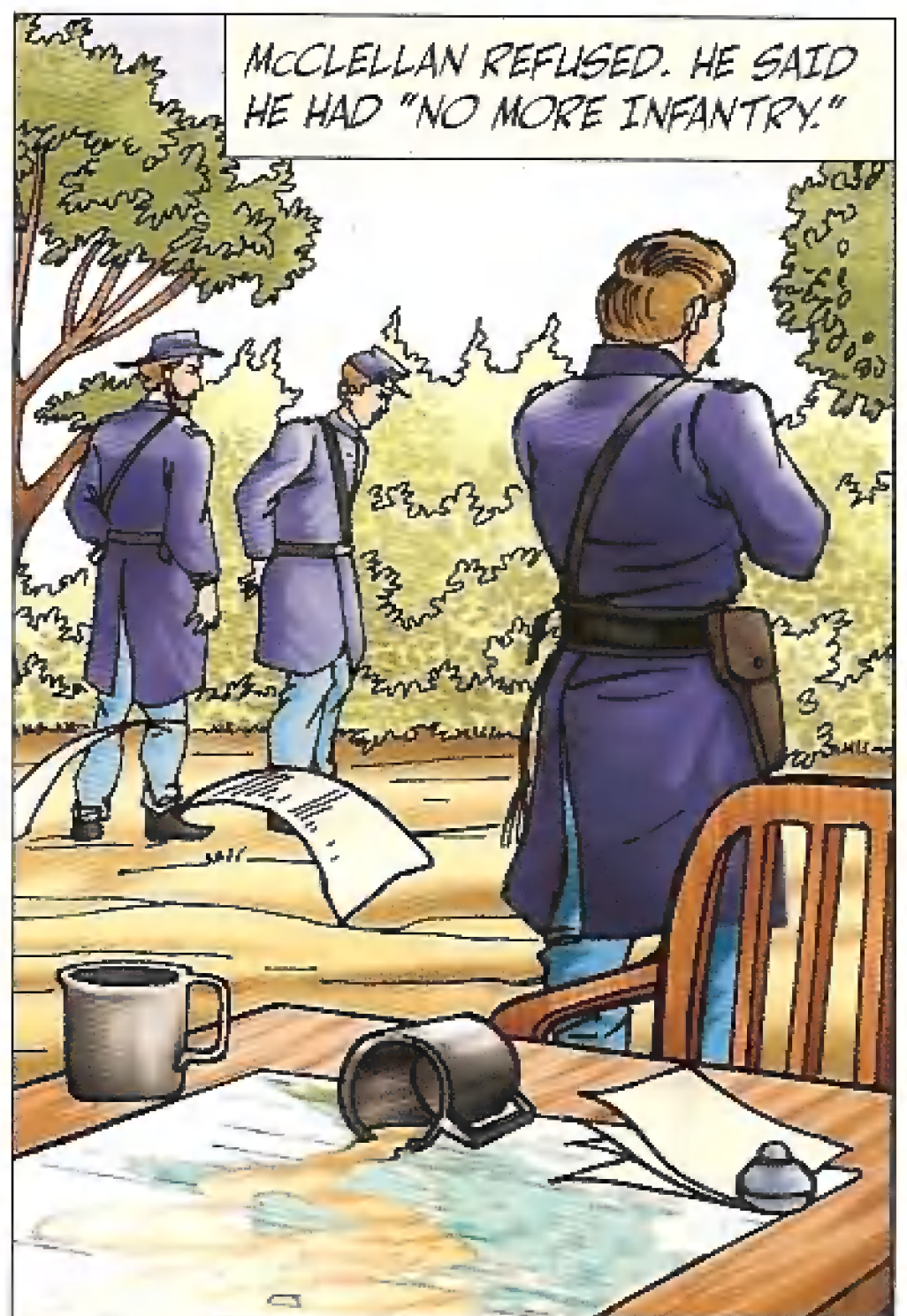
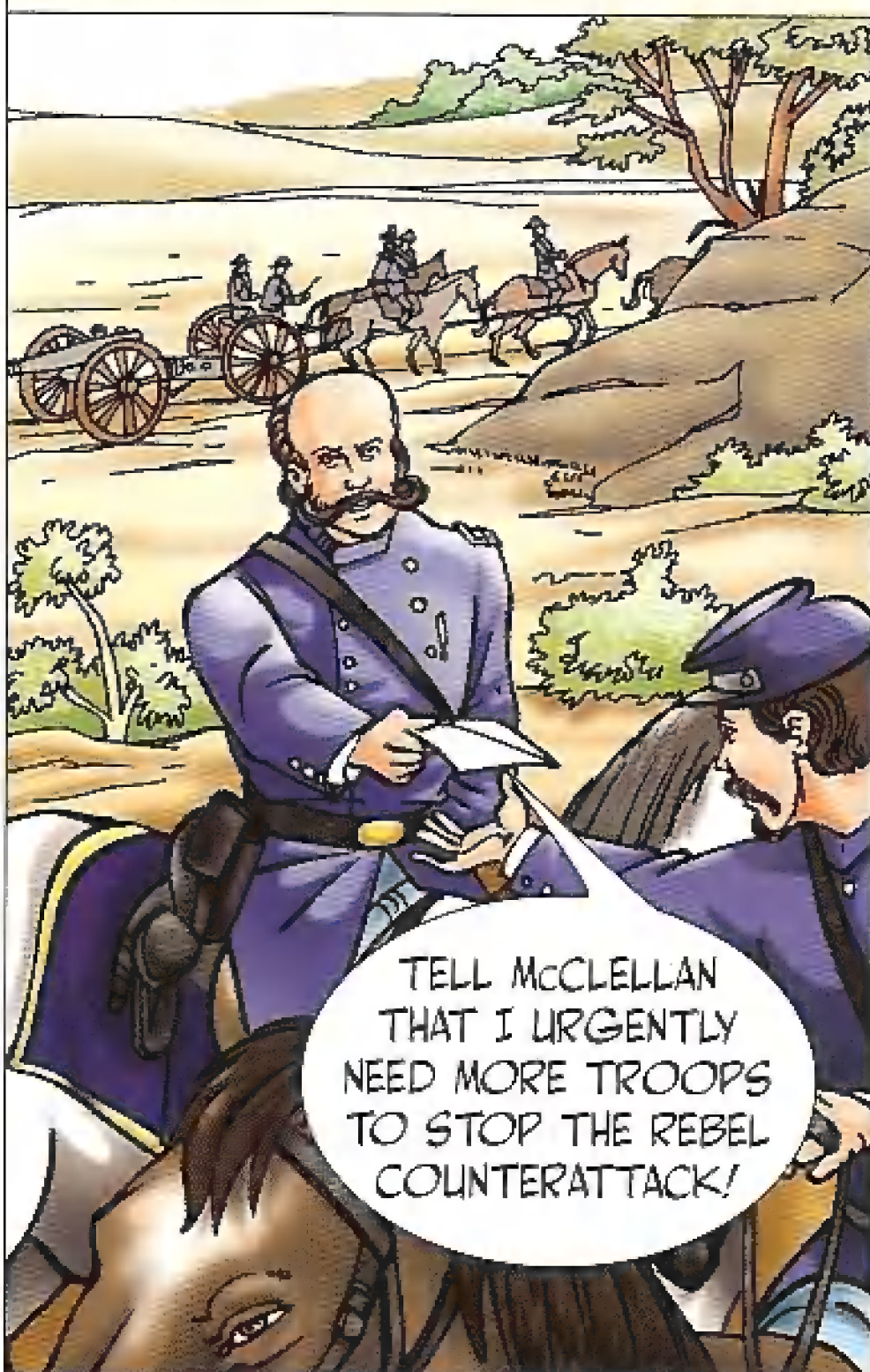


THE 14TH RHODE ISLAND AND THE 8TH CONNECTICUT FLED THE FIELD AS WELL.

UNION COMMANDERS PANICKED.
BURNSIDE ORDERED A RETREAT ALL
THE WAY BACK TO ANTIETAM CREEK.



UNION FORCES OUTNUMBERED THE
CONFEDERATES BY MORE THAN TWO TO
ONE, BUT BURNSIDE BELIEVED HE WAS
BEATEN.



IN FACT HE HAD TWO WHOLE CORPS IN
RESERVE. THE CONFEDERATES COULD
HAVE BEEN TOTALLY DEFEATED IF THE
UNION HAD MADE ONE MORE BIG PUSH.

BY SUNDOWN, THE BATTLE WAS OVER, AND 22,000 MEN LAY DEAD OR WOUNDED.



IT WAS THE SINGLE BLOODIEST DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

ONE SOLDIER LATER WROTE, "YOU COULD WALK FROM ONE END OF THE CORNFIELD TO THE OTHER WITHOUT STEPPING ON THE GROUND."



MORE AMERICAN GENERALS WERE KILLED IN THAT ONE DAY THAN WERE KILLED IN ALL OF WORLD WAR II.



LEE'S ARMY HAD PERFORMED A MIRACLE SIMPLY BY SURVIVING AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS . . .



. . . BUT THE CONFEDERATE DRIVE INTO THE NORTH WAS OVER.

ON NOVEMBER 7, 1862,
PRESIDENT LINCOLN
ORDERED MCCLELLAN TO
TURN COMMAND OF THE
ARMY OVER TO BURNSIDE.



BURNSIDE WOULD SOON BE
REPLACED AS WELL. (TODAY
HE IS REMEMBERED MOST
FOR THE FACIAL HAIR NAMED
AFTER HIM, SIDEBURNS.)

EDGAR KIMBALL WAS PROMOTED TO GENERAL
BUT WAS SHOT DEAD BY ANOTHER GENERAL
DURING A DISPUTE OVER A PASSWORD.



MANY YEARS AFTER THE
WAR, JOHN GORDON
AND FRANCIS BARLOW,
WHO HAD OPPOSED
EACH OTHER AT THE
SUNKEN ROAD, MET BY
CHANCE AT A DINNER
PARTY . . .



. . . AND BECAME THE
BEST OF FRIENDS.

THE END

THE HORRORS OF WAR

At the end of the battle, over 23,000 soldiers—12,000 Union and 11,000 Confederate—were dead, dying, wounded, or missing. This was a quarter of each army. Among them were 18 generals, nine from each side.

On September 18, Lee was on the defensive, in the unlikely case that McClellan would attack again. McClellan did not, and Lee's army slipped away across the river in the late afternoon. That left the Union army in possession of the battlefield, making Antietam a technical victory. That was enough for Lincoln to issue his Emancipation Proclamation five days later.

The Antietam battlefield saw more casualties in a single day than on any other day on American soil in history. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)

The proclamation made it clear that the Union was fighting the war for the freedom of all people. The people of Europe understood that, so no European nation interfered in America's conflict. The fate of the South was now in its own hands alone.

Photographer Mathew Brady came to the Antietam battlefield as Union soldiers were burying the dead. They paused to let him take his pictures. In October, Brady opened an exhibit in New York City called "The Dead of Antietam." It was the first time anyone had seen the horrors of war in photographs. At the time, war was still thought to be something romantic and glorious. Brady's work changed this view forever.

"Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them on our dooryard and along the streets, he has done something very like it," wrote the *New York Times*.

"Let him who wishes to know what war is look at this series of illustrations," wrote





▲
 Writer Oliver Wendell Holmes went to the Antietam battlefield to look for his son Oliver, Jr. Soldier Oliver, Jr., survived the war and went on to become a Supreme Court Judge. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)

American poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. He had just returned from the battlefield himself, where he had gone in search of his missing son, a Union officer.

President Lincoln was displeased by the way General McClellan conducted the battle and especially his failure to chase Lee's army. However, by calling Antietam a victory he could not immediately remove McClellan from command. Lincoln made a visit to McClellan's headquarters at Sharpsburg on October 1 to get him to advance. Then, from Washington, Lincoln ordered him to march on. McClellan offered excuses and did nothing. Finally, Lincoln removed him from command on November 10, 1863, replacing him with General Burnside.

▼
 President Lincoln (left) was unhappy that McClellan (right) did not pursue the Confederates immediately. Lincoln relieved him of command not long after the battle. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)



GLOSSARY

artillery	Large, heavy guns that are mounted on wheels or tracks.	muzzle	The front of a gun barrel.
barrage	A heavy outpouring of many things at once.	patent office	A government agency that examines claims to inventions.
canister column	A round container. A formation in which soldiers are placed one behind the other.	picket	A soldier positioned to protect his main army from surprise attack.
dismal	Causing, feeling, or showing gloom or depression.	regiment	A unit of troops made up of two or more battalions.
disposal	The act of throwing out or away.	round	Ammunition for a single shot from a gun.
divine	Of, from, or like a god.	sect	A group of people who share interests or beliefs.
engage	To take part or involve oneself.	skirmish	A minor fight between small bodies of troops.
infantry	The branch of an army trained to fight on foot.	uplift	To encourage.
inflict	To cause pain or suffering.	vain	Conceited.
initial	Of or happening at the beginning.	volley	A discharge of bullets from a gun.
intact	Not harmed or damaged.	volunteer	A person who does a job freely and usually without pay.
musket	A gun with a long barrel used before the invention of rifles.		

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ORGANIZATIONS

Antietam National Battlefield Park

P.O. Box 158

Sharpsburg, MD 21782-0158

001 (301) 432-5124

Web site: www.nps.gov/anti

National Civil War Museum

P.O. Box 1861

Harrisburg, PA 17105-1861

001 (717) 260-1861

The sunken road at Antietam, later known as "The Bloody Lane," was defended by over 2,000 Confederates. They were finally stopped by Union artillery. (Gerry Embleton © Osprey Publishing Ltd)

FOR FURTHER READING

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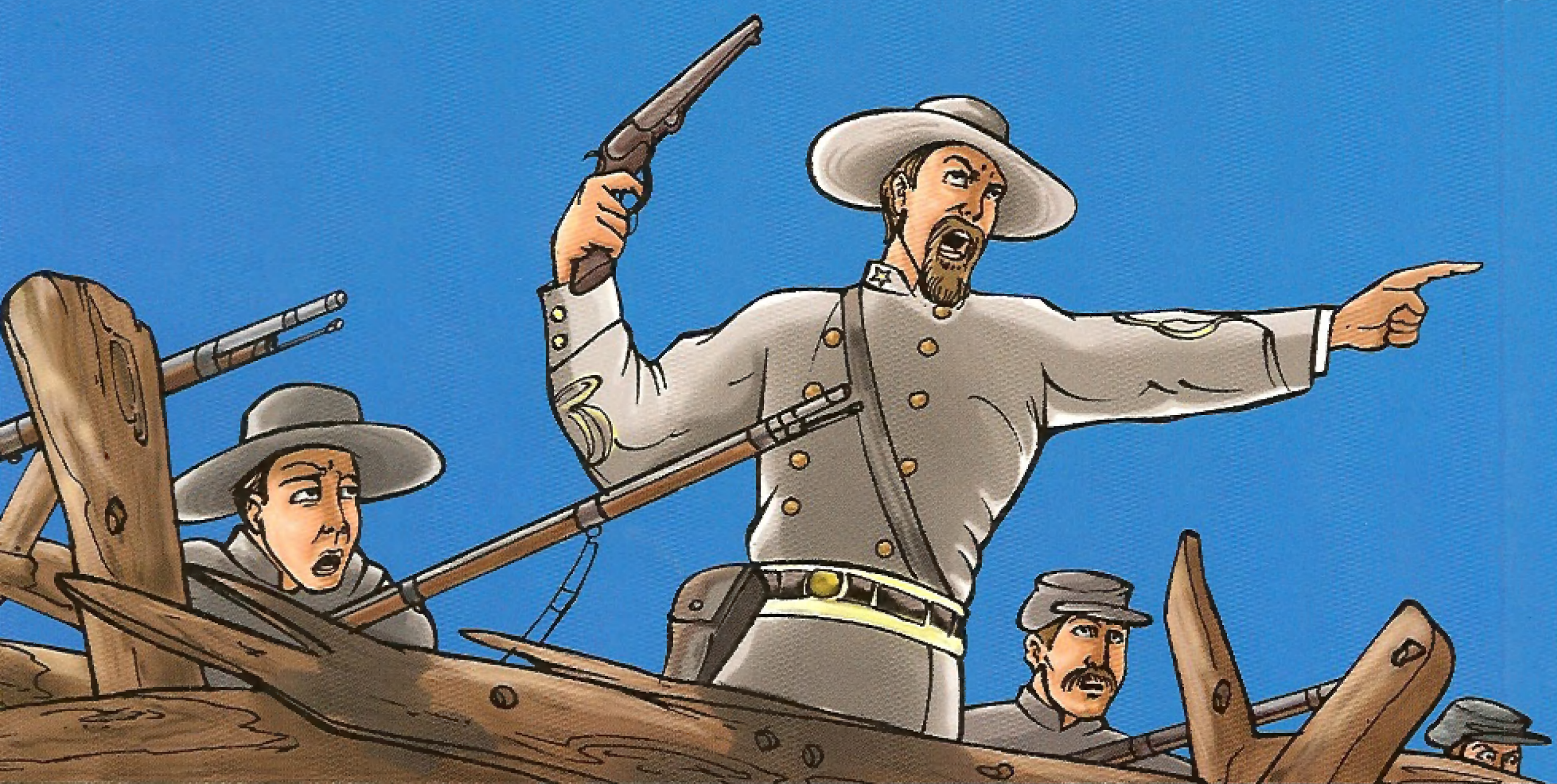
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Relive the terrible story of the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest day in American history. As Union and Confederate armies met, ordinary men and women showed extraordinary courage as they fought to decide the future of their country.

Meet John Gordon and Francis Barlow, who faced each other in the "bloody lane," in a desperate struggle for survival.

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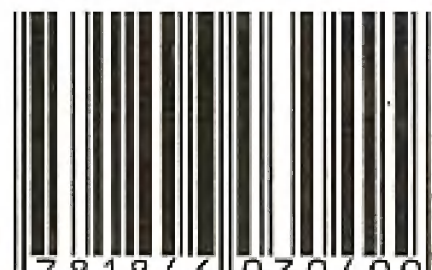


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